

# MONTANA MAGAZINE

OF HISTORY



LONE WOLF  
CUSTER BATTLE  
THE COWBOY ARTIST  
STAGECOACH DANGER  
WILDERNESS TRIP  
OLD INDIANS  
NEW BOOKS  
ROUNDUP

Featuring two of America's top  
writers, J. Frank Dobie and  
Richard Neuberger.

SUMMER 1954



# MONTANA MAGAZINE

## OF HISTORY



*To Preserve, Publish, Promote and Perpetuate Montana's History*



### CONTENTS

#### EDITORIAL STAFF

K. Ross Toole  
Editor

Michael Kennedy  
Managing Editor

Albert J. Partoll  
Associate

#### EDITORIAL BOARD

Anne McDonnell  
Merrill G. Burlingame  
Robert H. Fletcher  
Norman Winestine  
Paul C. Phillips  
H. G. Merriam  
Rita McDonald

#### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Norman Holter  
President

Howard A. Johnson  
Vice-President

Jessie Tabor Duthie  
Secretary

Charles A. Bovey  
William R. Mackay  
Howard A. Johnson  
Josephine I. Hepner  
Mrs. A. J. White  
Jessie Tabor Duthie  
Judge Ben Harwood  
Lena Bissonette  
Norman Holter  
Lester Loble  
Jean Bishop  
Sam Gillully  
Albert J. Partoll  
Merrill G. Burlingame  
Norman Winestine

Summer, 1954

Vol. 4—No. 3

Price \$1.00

The Lochsa, Realm of History and Grandeur <i>By Richard L. Neuberger</i> .....	1
Snowdrift, Lonest of all Lone Wolves <i>By J. Frank Dobie</i> .....	10
I Rode With Custer (A survivor's account) <i>Edited by Edgar I. Stewart</i> .....	17
Jaded Journey (1875 Stagecoach Ride) <i>By J. R. Richards</i> .....	30
The Story Behind "Waiting for a Chinook" <i>By Wallis Huidekoper</i> .....	37
Montana Medley: Early Indians <i>By Bob Fletcher</i> .....	40
Second Bonanza. (Final installment, Oil History) <i>By Don Douma</i> .....	45
Montana Miscellany <i>Nuggets from the frontier press</i> .....	50
Letters to the Editors .....	56
Director's Roundup <i>By K. Ross Toole</i> .....	64

### BOOK REVIEWS

Kick the Dead Lion, A Casebook of the Custer Battle <i>Reviewed by Addison R. Bragg</i> .....	57
Buffalo Chips. Bits of Book Chat about Montana .....	58
Cow Country Cavalcade. Maurice Frink <i>Reviewed by Robert G. Athearn</i> .....	59
On the Oregon Trail. Kenneth Spaulding <i>Reviewed by Dr. Paul C. Phillips</i> .....	59
The Banditti of the Plains. Mercer. (2 reviews) <i>Reviewed by J. Frank Dobie; R. B. David</i> .....	60
Indian Wars of the West. Wellman. <i>Reviewed by John T. Vance III</i> .....	61
Forthcoming Books .....	62

Published by Historical Society of Montana, Founded 1865

Montana Magazine of History is published quarterly by the Historical Society of Montana, Helena. Subscription rate, including annual membership in the Society, is \$3; single copies \$1. The Society does not assume responsibility for statements made by contributors. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned unless postage is provided. Entered as second class matter at the post office, Helena, Montana. Copyrighted and all rights reserved by Historical Society of Montana.

# THE LOCHSA

## REALM OF HISTORY AND GRANDEUR

By Richard L. Neuberger



Very few northwesterners have not heard of Richard Neuberger, indefatigable chronicler of this majestic region for Harpers, Reader's Digest, Saturday Evening Post, Colliers, Life, N. Y. Times and other leading periodicals. This is his first venture for us, but we certainly hope and expect that it will not be the last.

This 1954 painting of Lewis and Clark, by Harold Von Schmidt, has appeared in many national magazines. The Historical Society of Montana will soon hang the original in its permanent collection—generously given by the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Co. No information is available as to the locale of this 1804-1806 scene of the 8,000 mile expedition.

**YOU MAY HAVE READ "THEY'RE TAMING THE LOLO TRAIL" IN THE APRIL 10 SATURDAY EVENING POST. THIS IS MR. NEUBERGER'S SEQUEL—EXCLUSIVELY OURS. FOR MONTANANS OR TOURISTS, IT OFFERS A DELIGHTFUL GUIDE FOR A NEVER-TO-BE-FORGOTTEN VISIT.**

"The Lochsa! There's a name that sings in your ears!"

—Aged packer at Crooked Creek Bridge, 1953.

**T**HE Lochsa River is only 65 miles long. It drains 1,180 square miles of land, a mere polka-dot on earth's surface. Like many other mountain rivers in the Pacific Northwest, it surges through a deep canyon, where it lunges at rock walls with foaming claws. In some turbulent stretches, the Lochsa tumbles 30 vertical feet for each mile of distance. It fills the narrow gorge with a dull roar, like a freight train on a high trestle. The Lochsa rises in banks of snow at an elevation of 6,000 feet in the Bitterroot Range. It ends at an altitude of 1,250 feet, merging with its kindred stream, the Selway, to form the mighty Middle Fork of the Clearwater River.

Elers Koch, a leathery old retired forester, born in Bozeman of pioneer Montana parents, has told me that the Indians spoke of *Sel-way*, meaning "smooth water," and of *Loch-sa*, referring to "rough water." Koch, who now lives in Missoula, is fascinated by the Lochsa River. And, because of his fascination, I am intrigued, too, with this gurgling upland stream.

Indeed, when I think of a river of history, there comes not to mind the Hudson or the Mississippi or the Columbia, but the stunted Lochsa, with its hurtling passage through the Bitterroots, which separate Montana and Idaho.

This is the Northwest's river of destiny. It afforded the treacherous catwalk which led the first westbound white men down to navigable water that could take them to the Pacific. It gave the builders of the railroads some of their sternest hardships before, at last, they surrendered and tried to find less difficult conduits across the mountains. The Lochsa region was the funnel for the most tragic military retreat in the annals of the American West—the stubborn withdrawal by Chief Joseph and his Nez Perce Tribe, before pursuing cavalry and foot soldiers.

Elers Koch, in my opinion, knows more about the trail of Meriwether Lewis and

William Clark than any other living person. He dominates the acknowledgements in Bernard DeVoto's *The Course of Empire*. Koch wrote the historical markers on the Lolo Trail, where Lewis and Clark had the roughest time of their entire expedition. Then, as if to prove he was no ivory-tower historian, Koch himself bivouacked for many weeks on the rugged trail, erecting in place the carved wooden plaques which he had painstakingly written.

As we sat in his map-hung study on a quiet street of shade trees near the University campus in Missoula, this wizened but alert Forest-Service veteran of 74 said to me, "Great events seem to have concentrated in the basin of the little Lochsa River."



The author views one of the Forest Service markers inspired by Elers Koch in a dramatic section of the Lewis and Clark Trail between Lolo and Wierpe Prairie.



For three consecutive summers my wife and I have spent considerable time in this realm of wooded mountainsides, knobby peaks and rumpled chasms. We came to gather material for magazine articles, but we stayed to revel in an outdoor domain as idyllically pleasant as any I have ever seen in the Northwest or even in Alaska or Northern Canada.

I never have quite decided whether the appeal of the Lochsa region is in its majestic scenery or its momentous past—perhaps both. How can one determine? Standing at Indian Post Office on the Lolo Trail, beside a cairn of rocks which had guided Lewis and Clark, I looked out across a vast roller-coaster of alternating canyons and summits. Far off, loomed the dome which represented the 9,936-foot crest of El Capitan. In that moment I felt part of infinity. What changes had occurred here since Lewis and Clark had sought agonizingly in this wooded meadow for something they and their people could eat?

I turned to William Robert (Bud) Moore, 36-year-old U. S. Forest Ranger on the 509,000-acre Powell District. He had been brought up in this Erewhon of greenery and grandeur. He went to a one-room school near Lolo Hot Springs, Montana, where his father was a logger, and during a single winter Bud, while still in his teens, had taken \$2,100 in furs off a trapline he ran between the cold camps of Lewis and Clark.

"Bud," said I, "Are these the same rock cairns that Lewis described in his *Journals*?"

My voice may have sounded incredulous, but the tall Ranger replied matter-of-factly. "Sure, Dick," he said, "It's my opinion these cairns were established at Indian Post Office a long time before Lewis and Clark came through the area. I've lived in these parts all my life, and I've never been told differently."

I reached into my kitbag for the Hosmer edition of the Lewis and Clark *Journals*, which we carried with us. On June 27, 1806, as they were homeward



bound across the menacing Bitterroots, Lewis had written: "We resumed our route over the heights and steep hills of the same great ridge. At eight miles distance we reached an eminence where the Indians have raised a conic mound of stone six or eight feet high, on which is fixed a pole made of pine, about fifteen feet. . . From this elevated spot we have a commanding view of the surrounding mountains, which so completely enclose us that, although we have passed them once we almost despair of ever escaping them without the assistance of the Indians. . ."

I thought hard. Where else in America did tokens of the first white men to pass that way stand without guard or sentinel or protection, in the wide outdoors?

I glanced around again. The lofty ridge at Indian Post Office was dotted with conical heaps of stones, which Lewis had mentioned. Some of the jumbled cairns had trunks of lodgepole pine thrust upwards from them. Others were simple cones. But all, according to the wilderness-sired Forest Ranger at my elbow, dated from the time of Lewis and Clark.



Powell Ranger Station, where the starving explorers once killed a colt for food; but the name of the creek has been changed now.

And no lock and key shielded these relics from theft or mutilation, for comparatively few wayfarers ever penetrate the Lochsa's realm today.

This, to me, is the drama of the little mountain river that tumbles out of the Bitterroots for 65 rushing miles and then loses its identity in the Clearwater's Middle Fork.

It is why I say to people with a dual interest in history and in recreation in the out-of-doors: "Go to the Lochsa River that rises on the Montana-Idaho boundary. If you're disappointed, I'll pay for all your gasoline and oil."

I never yet have had to redeem this pledge. The Lochsa is so crystalline that my athletic wife, braver than her husband, was up to her neck in its icy reaches when she thought the water would barely reach to her hips. Maurine, who once taught swimming, conquered the Lochsa, as Leander subdued the Hellespont. "It's not for amateurs!" she sputtered, her skin the color of a Canadian Mountie's tunic. My wife, a cold-water swimmer, said she never had experienced a clearer, more invigorating stream.

This is the judgment, too, of Lyle F. Watts, ex-Chief Forester of the United States, who has inspected all the nation's 153 National Forests. "The Lochsa," said Watts to me, "is a masterpiece among rivers. Its water is classically clear, its riffles are just right for fishing and not too perilous for boating."

Powell Ranger Station is an island of buildings amidst the sea of spruce and fir and pine. It sprawls on one of the

bleakest of the Lewis and Clark campsites, where the starving explorers shot a colt to feed their hungry party. Oh, the ironies of nomenclature! "Killed - Colt Creek," a name chosen in painful adversity by the most famous explorers in American history, has now become dull and mundane "White Sand Creek," a name duplicated throughout the Rockies and its satellite ranges. And the Ranger Station, which occupies ground hallowed by the suffering of the men and the Indian woman who toted our flag to the Pacific, is named not for one of these pilgrims but for old Charley Powell, who used to trap marten and lynx and weasels hereabouts.

Yet the humdrum names are soon forgotten, for the terrain bristles with glamor. In a marshy pond at the foot of Wendover Creek, where it flows to the Lochsa, we watched a moose family foraging beneath the brackish water for sprouts and algae. Along the rutted forest road that led to the Lolo Trail, deer were constant watchers. On distant hillsides, herds of elk formed a tawny motting against the green underbrush. Mountain goats were specks of white on the crags stockading Indian Post Office, where the cairns of rock gave Lewis and Clark the welcome message that they were on the way out of this fortress of cliffs and pinnacles.

I do not wonder that Mr. DeVoto wrote last year in *Harper's*, "If working journalists are rewarded on the far shore, I will sometime get a long summer within a few miles of the Powell Ranger Station."

Because it is possible to do this short of Valhalla, I suggest driving southward a few miles from Missoula on U. S. 93 to the hamlet of Lolo. For 58 miles west of Lolo, the partly-completed Lewis and Clark Highway invades the forested sanctuary of the Lochsa. Then there is a roadless breach of 29 miles. On the other

Bear grass is abundant at Indian Post Office, where Lewis and Clark saw the rock cairns which guided them to the Clearwater in 1805.

side of this gap, the highway threads along the murmuring river to the Idaho town of Kooskia. This stretch of road, which also parallels the Middle Fork of the Clearwater for a portion of the distance, measures 49 miles in length.

Not far out of Lolo, the road surmounts Lolo Pass at an elevation of 5,233 feet. At this point Lewis and Clark first came down into a watershed which, ultimately, would lead them to a place where they could construct pine-log canoes for the voyage to tidewater, and thus into immortality. The river that gurgled off Lolo Pass the guiding Indians called *Koos-koos-kee*, the water that flows fast and clear. This was the Lochsa, but the expedition applied the name *Koos-koos-kee* to the entire Clearwater system. In this, of course, they were geographically correct, for the Lochsa is the last, lingering source of the Clearwater in the inner redoubt of the Bitterroots.

If you decide to challenge the Lochsa region from the Idaho rather than the Montana slope, the route is by State Highway 9 from Lewiston to Kooskia. Directly eastward out of Kooskia, Idaho No. 9 becomes the Lewis and Clark Highway. When the remaining breach of 29 miles is completed, it will be possible to drive straight through from Kooskia to Missoula in a comparatively few hours. Except for the switchbacks over the hump of Lolo Pass, the road hugs water level on the Lochsa like a hatband.

Indecisive creature that I am, I never have been able to decide which portal offers the greater attractions. The Montana entrance is, perhaps, richer in history. After all, it was in the vicinity of Powell Ranger Station that Lewis and Clark realized they would have to climb out of the abyss of the Lochsa because the precipices were too sheer to allow their horses to pass through the chasm. This was when they sought the high divide above the river, that knife ridge which would become celebrated in later



decades during development of the West as the Lolo Trail—a corruption of how the Indians understood the term *Le Louis*, by which the French-Canadian *voyageurs* referred to Captain Meriwether Lewis.

Yet the Idaho gateway is not without its lure. The Selway River duplicates much of the grandeur of the Lochsa. In fact, when we were in the area several years ago, a motion-picture company had agreed it could economize on travel funds by filming a Mountie thriller called *The Wild North*, which starred Stewart Granger, in the narrow valley trenched by the Selway. Devoted though I am to the Canadian Rockies, I had to admit that the Lochsa's twin river was a reasonable facsimile of the breath-taking scenery of Banff and Jasper and Lake Louise. Fenn Ranger Station, near the union of the Lochsa and the Selway, has modern buildings and a friendly Ranger named Glenn Boy, who was a combat hero of World War II, with many decorations.

If you want to fish or boat or swim or drive your car in incredible grandeur, stay close to the surface of Lochsa. But if history is your meat and potatoes, then you must get up onto the Lolo Divide, which is the term that old-timers use for the ridge above the river.

Indians did not travel the riverbottoms. There was no place for horses in these nearly-vertical chasms. The Indians lacked bulldozers, blasting powder and pick axes to hew a shelf for travel. So they journeyed on the ridges. They may have been using the Lolo Trail as a

route as early as the year 1600. The Nez Perce depended upon a thoroughfare across the Bitterroots to get them to buffalo country on the Montana plains. Otherwise they would have had to be largely a tribe of fish-eaters. The cairns at Indian Post Office showed them the most direct route to Lolo Pass.

After Lewis and Clark had struggled over the Lolo on their way back to civilization with a story of triumph for President Jefferson, a curtain descended on the Lolo Divide. The Indians used it when they went to their annual buffalo hunts, but white men shunned the slender trail. However, camelbacked little steam locomotives were puffing through New England and the Alleghanies, and some day, inevitably, they would chuff to California and to Orgeon. Was the Lolo a route for the iron horse?

In 1854 Lieutenant John Mullan, Jr., surveyed the Lolo as a possible rail passage over the Bitterroot mountains. His report was dismal: "I can arrive at but one conclusion—that the route is thoroughly and utterly impracticable for a railway. The country is one immense bed of rugged, difficult, pine-clad mountains, that can never be converted to any purpose for the use of men. . . In all my explorations I have never seen a more uninviting bed of mountains."

A railroad was one thing, a beleaguered Indian tribe another. In 1877 Joseph and his Nez Perce followers were slowly backing out of the Oregon country, in the face of heavy pressure from General Oliver O. Howard and the 2nd U. S. Infantry. Greedy settlers wanted the Indians' fertile lands in the Wallowa Valley. In his book *Chief Joseph*, Chester A. Fee has claimed that "none but expert frontiersmen and Indians" could ride down the terrible saddles and ravines which split the Lolo Divide like the notches of a comb. Yet Howard, who had lost his right arm at the Battle of Fair Oaks in the Civil War, drove untried recruits over these dizzy brinks, both on foot and on horseback.

Before he died in 1944, Colonel Charles Erskine Scott Wood, who had been Howard's aide-de-camp, told me about that fearful pursuit along the Lolo:

"I shall never forget the Lolo Trail. It was so pitted with ravines and saddles that Joseph took his time. He knew troops could not come up to him in haste. Our necks would have been forfeit. The descent into the gulf carved by Lolo Creek was like falling over a wall. We dragged heavy equipment along the monstrous trail. I do not know whether this was the greater feat or Joseph's passage with hundreds of women and children. I believe our soldiers were more frightened, but they were kinder, in a way. They could not treat horses as the Indians did. We stumbled upon dozens of maimed and dying ponies, ravaged by the cruel trail. The Indians had left them behind. We shot them as we went by."

A posse of citizen soldiers from the Bitterroot Valley and state militia, in Montana Territory, hoped to bottle up Joseph by plugging Lolo Pass with a barricade. They forgot about the surrounding crags, and that the Indians with their horses could go places which would intimidate a white man on foot. Joseph turned the flank of this log fortress. Said one of the defenders of what later came to be known as "Fort Fizzle" [Built by Capt. C. C. Rawn and troops from newly-built Fort Missoula]:

"About 10 o'clock we heard singing, apparently above our heads. Upon looking, we discovered the Indians passing along the side of the cleft, where we thought a goat could not pass, much less an entire tribe of Indians with all their impediments."

Nearly a third of a century after the outnumbered Nez Perce found they could make the Lolo a temporary escape hatch, the Northern Pacific Railroad decided to question Lieutenant Mullan's estimate of the pass as a rail route. In 1909 survey parties were sent into the Lochsa wilds. I have had a series of communications



with F. N. Griggs of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, who was one of the men hired by the N. P. for that wild and challenging assignment. A few of his experiences are illuminating:

"The bears used to steal food out of our cook shack, until cold weather; and the chief had to give orders to quit shooting at them in the night for fear of killing some of the men. . . The first night one of the men was drowned in Lolo Hot Springs. We had one axeman injured and we took him into Missoula, where he lost a leg from blood poisoning. The rear chainman was killed by a tree falling on him. We carried him on a stretcher to the head of the old wagon road on the east side of the pass, then in a wagon until we met the doctor who had been summoned from Missoula. We traveled all night and a pair of cougars followed us in the bitter cold and howled enough to curdle your blood."

Mr. Griggs came away with many memories. "Our instrument man in Lolo Pass," he wrote to me, "was Mr. Jackson, who had worked on the White Pass & Yukon Railroad in Alaska, and he often told us that the Lochsa was tougher than that country." On the Lolo Trail a pack horse had slid off a tightrope summit with Meriwether Lewis's favorite writing desk on its back. Near this point the Northern Pacific survey had a similar disaster, according to Mr. Griggs:

"One of the pack animals with a 200-pound sack of sugar on its back, went over the cliff and into the river on a slippery switchback. The boys said the Lochsa River water tasted sweet for a day or two after that. It was so cold the rivers froze from the bottom—they ran too swift to freeze on top."

Eventually, the Northern Pacific learned that Lieutenant Mullan, of the Corps of Army Engineers, had appraised the Lochsa's railroading possibilities with keen accuracy. After 20 costly miles of grading had been completed, the N. P. abandoned the venture. Chief Engineer

SUMMER, 1954



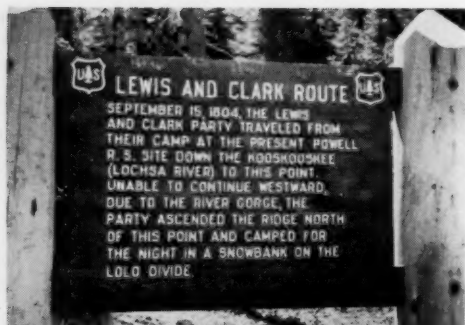
One of the famous Lolo Trail cairns, believed erected long before the first white man crossed the rugged trail.

Darling told his superiors in St. Paul that the grade seemed much too steep for economical operation. It would have been a zone of "helper districts," with so many locomotives necessary that the costs of freight operation might have been prohibitive. Today, the Northern Pacific ascends the Bitterroots in two places, but no ties have been set down or ballast tamped in Lolo Pass. It was too tough for trains.

Yet this very formidability is some of the attraction of the Lochsa region. Had the N. P. grappled successfully with Lolo Pass, the rock cairns on the Lolo might long since be gone. The tin-can and orange peel brigade would have arrived. Civilization could have subdued this wilderness stronghold, where outdoor majesty and original history still reign supreme.

Whether the supremacy of the wilderness will continue may depend upon a controversy over two dams planned for Bruce's Eddy and Penny Cliffs, sites along the main Clearwater downstream from the mouth of the Middle Fork. These projects are being promoted by five private utility companies, which hope the Federal government will assist





Another of the graphic Koch markers which do so much to clarify the famous explorer's progress through the Lochsa region.

financially in the undertaking. Many outdoor groups in Idaho oppose the dams because they might flood the elk range, the forests and the meadows along the Lochsa. Furthermore, some sections of the Lewis and Clark Highway would have to be relocated.

It is a repetition of the age-old controversy of the backwoods versus machinery. Sportsmen contend that one of the continent's most impressive solitudes would be tampered with, to the point of destruction. The power companies insist the kilowatts are necessary to progress. I believe the Northwest needs more hydroelectric power. I also feel that the Lochsa fastness should not be changed by flood and transmission lines. For these reasons, I am torn. Yet I subscribe to the arguments of Idaho and Montana sportsmen that the dam sites along the upper Clearwater should not be developed until power projects have been constructed at other places in the region, where recreational and historic values will not be imperiled by the reservoirs.

Let's spare the Lochsa until there is no other riverbed in the Northwest for the dam-builders to diamond-drill and to pour concrete! Why eliminate scenic grandeur and shrivel the route of Lewis and Clark, when alternative sites exist for the production of electrical energy?

Along the Lolo now weaves a trail. The traveler with stout lungs and legs can ride this trail on horseback or walk it on foot. If he has a sturdy automobile which is able to endure plenty of abuse, he even can drive the Lolo Divide road,

a narrow slot for fire protection that the Forest Service has draped around mountainsides like a lariat, just below the Lolo Trail.

At Lowell, Idaho, where the Lochsa and the Selway merge their chilly flow, stands a comfortable house of scoured stones. Inside I talked with a belle from Old Virginia who had married Frank Bowles, a cattle rancher. In a discarded school bus, Butler Bowles transported her family's heirloom furniture from the home state of Thomas Jefferson and Meriwether Lewis. She told me that, driving over the Lolo Divide road, she felt the same way as she had in some Virginia shrines. "I was in the presence of history," said Mrs. Bowles.

The people of this backwoods domain vote at Lowell; and this may be the largest election precinct in the United States. It covers approximately 2,500 square miles, an area bigger than the entire state of Delaware. Powell Ranger Station lies within this titan-sized voting precinct, and yet it is far closer to the Montana portal to the Lochsa region. This means that Idaho voters living at Powell confront two stern choices when they want to exercise their right of franchise. They can travel the Lolo, the most direct route to the ballot box at Lowell, or they must make a hegira of 466 miles to cross the Bitterroots on U. S. 10 and thus come to Lowell by the back door, so to speak.

After he had read General Howard's reports, the Chief of Staff of the United States Army, William T. Sherman, had observed, "The Lolo Trail is one of the worst trails for man and beast on the North American continent."

But the passing years have softened even the grim Lolo. There are many places on the Lolo Divide forest-protection road where an easy stroll leads to the old original trail. You must walk on

Maurine Neuberger stands at the point near Orofino, Idaho, where the explorers felled five huge pines to make canoes which would carry them down the Clearwater, the Snake and Columbia rivers.

this trail, as we did. Your boots or walking shoes will press down the bygone moccasin tracks of Lewis and Clark, of Sacajawea, of Ordway and Drouillard and all the rest. You may brush past spire-like Engelmann spruce that might have snagged frayed wisps of buckskin or elkhide from the jackets of the great explorers. The signs put up by Elers Koch will tell you where to unroll your sleeping bag on ground that felt their worn blankets. You can fry your bacon, trout and hashed-browns in places that saw more than 30 people trying to keep up strength and morale on one scrawny timber wolf. And where the campsites of the explorers do not exist, you can look down into the dizzy gaps that challenged the poor, bewildered soldiers who were hard on the hoofprints of the martyred Joseph and his fleeing people.

It does not take a vivid imagination to put ghosts at your side when you visit the realm of the Lochsa. I remember looking down into the silvery river in Black Canyon, as twilight muffled the solitudes. In the gathering darkness, I wondered what had been the thoughts of all that host who had stood there before me—argonauts and Indians, soldiers and guides, engineers and survey crews, cavalymen and explorers, trappers and



Virginia gentlemen, privates and generals, people who were forever unknown and people whose names would be heralded as long as the American nation survives.

In the gloom the hair on the nape of my neck rose and I could feel my backbone shiver. And the Lochsa tumbled onwards—to the Middle Fork, to the main Clearwater, to the Snake, to the Columbia and so at last to salt water. History has been made here, and the fate of a continent had been decided. What if Lewis and Clark had been thwarted by the battlement of the Bitterroots? Where would the international border be today? But the Lochsa had let them through—hungrily and miserably, yet it had been a route of empire.

I listened to the little river groaning in its mountain prison, and I thought, with the poet Swinburne, that "even the weariest river winds somewhere safe to sea."

[THE END]



# SNOWDRIFT

*Lonest of all  
lone  
wolves*



**S**NOWDRIFT, they called him, but it was not the heightened grey-ness of his coat that made him famous. Whiteness is against a wolf for the same reason that on Indian-threatened frontiers no man wanted to ride a white horse. White makes too clear a target at night. Night was when Snowdrift operated mostly, night and dusk and dawn. For the comparatively few men who ever saw him, one glimpse was enough to identify him. The handicap seemed to sharpen his intelligence; it illuminated his achievements. Considering the odds against him, the limitations of his species that individual daring and cunning surmounted, one inclines to rank him above every other wolf in Western history, except, always, the Custer wolf.

His most familiar beat was over a wide front seventy-five miles long between the Belt Mountains of Montana and the Bear Paws. It took him through the Highwood Mountains and across the Missouri River, which he swam whether it was high or low, churning with ice or clear. In the frozen dead of winter he walked across it. To go the length of his range, he had to cross two railroad tracks, the rights-of-way of which were fenced with sheep- or wolf-proof wire.

He would find a low place and dig under or use a culvert, but never used the same place twice. There were other wolf-proof fences he had to pass through. He was known to cover 125 miles in 24 hours. When he was bound for far places, he travelled in a long, sweeping trot that approached a lope, and it was tireless. He had longer legs than nearly any other wolf. Not once, but again and again, he made a kill fifty miles from where he had made one the preceding night. Often

**WE PROUDLY PRESENT A CLASSIC FROM  
THE PEN OF ONE OF THE GREAT WESTERN  
HISTORIOGRAPHERS**

# Like A Phantom From The Open Range Days When Wolves Were The Cattlemen's Greatest Scourge, This Savage Predator Haunted The Judith Basin

Publication rights by permission of the author and Outdoor Life Magazine.



he would travel forty miles from one kill before making another. Ranchers knew him for 300 miles around.

He had been caught in a trap while young and lost a claw from his left front foot. The missing toe made his track distinct, and tracks always make a record for those who can read.

He began depredating on cattle about 1917 and during the next thirteen years killed perhaps 1,500 head, two a week being a conservative average. During the years of his killing and keeping free, between 150 and 200 other wolves, counting pups, were cleaned out of his territory; indeed, it was absolutely cleaned of wolves until only he was left. Rewards up to \$500 were offered for his scalp. Dozens of trappers from Montana, other states, and Canada tried for the reward and the reputation that getting him would bring. Ranchmen in his wide and shifting range habitually carried rifles, hoping for a shot at him.

The individuals who sighted him at anything like close range were almost invariably not looking for him and were as much taken by surprise as he was. He always seemed to know when a man was on his trail. Then he took to the mountains, coming down only for beef.

Headquarters of his realm was Stanford. Here sportsmen from as far away as New Jersey came with their hounds to hunt him down. When they got a first-hand view of the millions of acres of canyons, peaks, and ridges that made up most of Snowdrift's range, they usually lost their dream of swift execution. He turned on a pack of five Russian hounds that had run themselves down after him and killed the isolated leader. The other

hounds made for their far-behind master. The idea of running Snowdrift with hounds died.

Yet he bore none of the scars that usually mark fighting leaders. He did not want to lead a pack. So far as known, he did not once gang up with other wolves to run a deer or antelope into a snow bank for capture. He relied on his lone self. He wanted liberty above all else, and he knew that he could maintain it only in loneliness, without obligations to, attachments to, or connections with any other individual of his kind, be she winsome or be he ever so cunning.

During all the years of his hunted life no man ever saw Snowdrift with another wolf. Always he ranged alone. Yet he was no celibate. The ordinary male wolf stays with a bitch in heat for two or three weeks. When Snowdrift, as tracks showed, got with one, he did not dally long before satisfying himself and cutting off to go his lone way. In undisturbed nature, wolves pair off and remain mates for years, even a lifetime, the male helping to guard dens and feed the young. Snowdrift never guarded anything but his life and liberty, never fed anything but the buzzards and scavenger coyotes following him afar off for his leavings.

Early in 1923 Barney Brannon, noted hunter of predatory animals, learned by sign that Snowdrift had mated with a female known as Cripple Foot. Barney turned his attention to her, hoping to intercept Snowdrift. He knew that she

J. Frank Dobie, born on a Texas cattle ranch, has spent all of his illustrious life learning more of the West. He has become an authority on range life and literature; has taught and lectured widely, both here and abroad; and has carved a shrine for himself with such fine books as *The Longhorns*, *Coronado's Children* and others of lasting merit.



would pup in about two months, and at the end of that period he became convinced that she had a den along Dead Man's Coulee in the Little Belt Mountains. For two weeks he rode hills and cuts, lay under snowbanks, crouched behind rocks, trying to see Cripple Foot or her trail. Then one night snow fell and the next morning Barney struck the track he was looking for. He followed its twistings for five miles before coming to a craftily concealed hole in rocks under fallen logs.

When he dismounted to inspect the hole, he left his rifle in the saddle scabbard. As he leaned over, Cripple Foot charged to the mouth of the opening. He kicked in dirt and stones to drive her back. She came on and he hit her on the mouth with a big rock. As she backed down, he stuffed his chaps and coat into the hole to bottle her up. He always carried a short-handled shovel on his saddle. With it he dug a hole straight down to the tunnel. As soon as it was made, Cripple Foot tried to come up but was killed with one shot. Barney got two pups and was about to leave when he heard a whimper in another compartment of the den. There he found four others. The den was on a conspicuous mound. Cripple Foot had been using the pile of logs over it as a lookout, well concealed, for spying over the country before leaving to hunt.

At this very time, as it was later learned, Snowdrift was in the Bear Paws, away north of the Missouri River. He was never known to enter a den. Sometimes wolves den in old prospect holes. Bob Kennon used to dig holes at likely spots, bring bones from kills at other places and scatter them about the prepared dens, making everything favorable for occupancy. A few times this ruse worked on females about to pup. No blizzard could drive—any more than a female could attract, Snowdrift into a hole. His self-sufficiency had no limitations.

A Biological Survey man kept a pet female wolf that had lured many a male to death. One winter she came into heat in Snowdrift's range. The trapper chained her out and ringed the ground around her with traps. If Snowdrift sensed her, he went the other way.

Like other males of the canine family, he left his "sign" on bushes and revisited them to see if a female had responded. Many traps were set at these "markers" of his—traps smoked over burning sagebrush, dipped in sagebrush tea, rubbed with beef tallow, handled only with smoked gloves. Never was he known to come to a bush or tree where a trap had been set. One trapper found that he had used the bleached skull of a dead horse for a marker. The trapper sprinkled scent just west of the skull and set a trap east of it. In the night Snowdrift scratched about the skull a little but avoided both trap and scent.

No man who followed Snowdrift ever figured him out well enough to "take roundance" on him. One of his followers was Bob Kennon, packer, cowboy, forest ranger, trapper, friend of Charlie Russell's. On winter while I was in Great Falls, Montana, on Charlie Russell's trail, I fell in with Bob Kennon and from him learned the main parts of this history.

---

This old photo by Huffman is titled "A Wolfer's Roost." This hunter was an unusually good housekeeper for the times.

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY





A remarkable early picture of a wolfer and buffalo slaughterers' cave, from the Historical Library's Marcyes collection.

For a long time he hunted after Snowdrift with Barney Brannon.

They wore sheepskins over their shoes to hold in the human scent. They boiled sage and soaked their boots in the tea. They smeared cow manure over their boots and tried in other ways to make their trails smell only of the range. Barney Brannon found some enormous hoofs slipped from a steer's skeleton. He fastened them on the bottoms of his shoes so that his tracks looked like cow tracks, and thus followed Snowdrift to study his habits and learn his ways. He thought that if Snowdrift doubled back, as he sometimes doubled, he would be thrown off his guard. He never was. A wolf is likely to use a certain beat over and over if he is sure that a man is not after him. After Snowdrift had marked a route, a long time had to pass before he considered it safe. He had plenty of room and he knew every feature of it.

He would not approach a place, particularly a pass, that his senses told him had been touched by man. His intuition often seemed keener than his keen senses. Maybe two or three days after he had passed a certain way he would sneak back to it, only from one side or the other, to see if a man were tracking him. He took towards all men the advice that Jim Bridger gave the Indians: "When you see sign, look out; when you don't see any sign at all, look out sharper than ever."

Once men rolled up the wire of about a mile of fence that he was used to going through. Old posts left in the ground continued to mark the line. Until the end of his life, Snowdrift always went around that mile-long scar; he was never known to cross it again. Something had been there; men had come and done something. He did not understand exactly what, but he understood the deadliness of men.

SUMMER, 1954



In 1922 government surveyors worked for several weeks on Baldy Mountain in the Highwoods. This mountain had been one of Snowdrift's resorts. It was three years before he came nearer than three miles to the pegs the surveyors had driven down, the trees they had blazed, the lines through the underbrush they had cut.

When the fall roundups, lasting a month or so, were on, Snowdrift altogether avoided the range they were working. He was not daring, but discreet. "Safety First" seemed to be his motto.

A wolf caught in a trap chained to a clog dragged it quite a distance before hung up. Snowdrift came along, followed the drag only a few steps, then circled around the trapped wolf, near enough for his senses to tell him all that he wanted to know. He kept far enough away to be safe from machinations that might be allied to the man-trapped animal.

It is wolf nature to follow the tracks of another wolf. When Snowdrift came upon the tracks of another wolf, he, instead of following them, crossed them at right angles or veered away, changing his own course if necessary to avoid proceeding with them. Constantly and unceasingly he did all he could to avoid calling attention to himself. Coming to a small branch of water, he would hunt



Charles M. Russell, like any early cowman, was bedeviled by the savage prairie wolf. Here again, as in the title illustration, he depicts the sport of wolf-roping in the Judith Basin almost half a century before Snowdrift's time.

a narrow place—or go directly to it, for he seemed to have a memory of every feature of the land—and jump it, so as to not make plain tracks in the mud. He never crossed twice at the same place. To defecate, he walked out into brush, made his deposit unobtrusively, and circled back to his route.

Wolves have a great amount of curiosity, but Snowdrift never allowed curiosity to get the better of his judgment. Once Bob Kennon and Barney Brannon tried the flag trick on him. They tied a piece of red cloth to a green bush in a place he was almost certain to pass. He, as tracks told, passed some distance to one side but made no investigation. Two other wolves that investigated stepped into traps.

It is the nature of wolves to gnaw on old bones, chew on the tips of cow and buffalo horns lying on the ground. Bob and Barney collected bones of cattle that had died on the range and piled them into a conspicuous mound on an open flat. The bone pile attracted the attention of a number of wolves. One would circle around it, at first staying maybe a quarter of a mile away, gradually over a period of nights drawing nearer and nearer, though few would get too near. One night four young crossbreeds, half wolf and half dog, got close enough to be

caught in the maze of traps. Snowdrift saw the bone pile all right but never swerved from his direction, more than a quarter of a mile away, to investigate it. He ignored mounds of rocks—an often-used decoy—in the same way.

A bear will tear the bark off a fallen log, even claw the log to slivers if it is decayed sufficiently, looking for ants. Using sticks, instead of their odiferous hands, to gather bear-torn bark, trappers mounded it up in places to attract wolves. More than once they enticed a wolf into a trap by this method, but never even interested Snowdrift.

The wiliest of wolves succumb eventually to curiosity concerning a scent or to its magnetic power. Barney Brannon dug holes, sprinkled the bottoms with his most potent scent lures, fixed traps over the holes and covered them with leaves, twigs, and dry horse manure. Some smart wolf might try to dig under the trap to get to the smell and catch a paw in the steel jaws. Snowdrift would run from any such scent as if it were as dangerous as a man shooting at him.

In winter Barney would shoot a rabbit with a .22, bend his ears back, where they remained frozen stiff, as if the rabbit were asleep, and place the body in snow near a tuft of grass. A coyote or a

green lobo might be fooled, but Snowdrift disdained investigating any such falsity.

Trappers put out dummy baits, balls of cow or horse tallow, getting wolves used to them before inserting strychnine in similar balls. Snowdrift was never known to notice such a bait, though his tracks passed right over it.

No king of the Middle Ages with an official taster was more distrusting of food set before him and no connoisseur of wines could be choosier than Snowdrift was of his meat. He killed on high ground. He killed only when he was hungry, never wantonly, and he habitually selected his fare. If he had a craving for strong meat, he did not hesitate to bring down a cow or a steer weighing a thousand pounds. He could top a herd as accurately as a stockyard's butcher. After his prime was passed, he generally took younger animals, but never a cull. If fat meat was available, he had it. He preferred killing far out on the range, but he ate from cattle on feed, near human habitations, and took his toll from farmers as well as from big ranchmen. There were farmers in the Judith Basin who almost nightly for years hung lighted lanterns in their cow lots to ward off the light-fearing bandit.

His method—the wolf method—was to find an animal out from a bunch, run at it, cut its hamstring and eat either the hindquarters or the vitals. After he had taken his fill of meat, he was through with the carcass. He did not return for a second meal as most young wolves and many grown ones do. Some wolves will approach an old carcass apparently only for a delicious whiff; some will chew like a coyote on a piece of dried hide. Snowdrift was a patrician. He would not approach to smell and would not touch in any way any carcass but a fresh one of his own killing.

Once a government trapper found seven or eight sheep that had been killed by some predator, only one of them eaten. Without examining closely for tracks, he

suspected Snowdrift. He was in Snowdrift's country, and Snowdrift and the reward for him occupied his mind. Bob Kennon, happening by, told him: "Snowdrift never kills sheep. He is a beef-eater. He never kills for the game of killing—only to eat. A bear did this." The government trapper was convinced, but he piled up logs to attract attention on a hillside not far from the dead sheep, put out a quarter of a horse for bait, and set traps about. The arrangement was conspicuous; the odor of the horsemeat drifted far. Two or three times, as sign showed, Snowdrift passed between half a mile and a mile and a half away from the logs, stopped and looked, and kept going his way. Nor was any bear caught.

As soon as he ate, Snowdrift left the telltale carcass for some hiding place he had in mind, there to rest. But he wouldn't rest long. He seemed to require as little sleep as Napoleon. Moving or in hiding, he kept alert. For months at a time there was not a day when some man was not on his trail. He knew that he was hunted. Year in and year out, he lived on the dodge.

One summer morning while Bob Kennon was packing salt on mules, to be distributed over the range, he left his rifle in camp. That was the morning he sighted Snowdrift lying down beside a knoll of rocks on a ridge, a long way off. Bob turned back for camp, released the mules and put the rifle in his scabbard. Of course Snowdrift had disappeared long before he returned to the resting place. Bob trailed him all day without finding where he stopped again. He did find a kill the wolf had made not far from where he was sighted.

Trappers on high points sometimes caught glimpses of Snowdrift through field glasses, generally far off. He would walk slow, stop, sit on his haunches and look around in all directions. If all was clear, he might pick out a spot whence he could see and there lie down and put his ear to the ground to listen.



An early C.M.R. pen and ink drawing of a wolf hunt with dogs.

He liked to travel ridges, against rocky bluffs, in brush, but up where he could look out. He never followed a trail or road. In daytime he would hardly cross an open draw, where a man on horseback could get a run at him. He had been chased by cowboys and once by a car. He always seemed to know the features of the land ahead of him for a long distance. He would not run blindly into unfavorable ground. Although his habitual posture was upstanding, he could crawl on his belly to keep hidden. He would go a mile out of his way to get on a high point with a clear view in all directions. Here he would lie down in sagebrush, unseen but seeing.

He had favorite lying-up places, scattered over the country, but would never go directly to one of them. He would go to some point, look long at the place where he wished to hide, and then, if it seemed safe, go to it. When he got there, he would not lie down under a bush where he had lain before.

Once while Snowdrift was still in his prime, a man got a shot at him about 500 yards off, in the breaks of the Missouri River. He had just filled up on yearling meat and was making for the far-away Highwoods.

As he grew heavy-footed from age, the long delayed shot of finality was almost inevitable. It came one spring morning in 1930 from a rancher out looking through his cattle. Snowdrift was eating from the carcass of a fat calf when he heard, too late, the hoof beats of the rancher's horse. The years had no doubt deadened his hearing. He had to run

#### ON VISITING CUSTER BATTLEFIELD

The road is like other roads; it is too wide,  
Too smooth, too easy; it makes a common place  
Of land that should seem grim and seem to hide  
Instead of flaunt it scarred and dusty face.  
Here, says the sign, the Indians spread their camp.  
There (neatly tagged) the soldiers left the hill  
To let their horses drink. Death left his stamp  
Here first, the marker says, then gorged his fill.  
To this hot hillside, where now I stand and spell  
The signs, men fled, in hopeless nightmare  
flight.  
Where now I stand, by two's and three's, men fell  
By their own hands to cheat the desperate plight  
Of capture, torture, worse by far than death—  
All this, where now I stand and gladly draw my  
breath.

—Ruth Gillespie Staunton

across a little open flat and was about two hundred yards off when the bullet overtook him. He was so old that all his hairs had turned white. His back teeth were gone and the front ones were worn down. His left hind leg bore the scar of a bullet that another range man had fired in 1926.

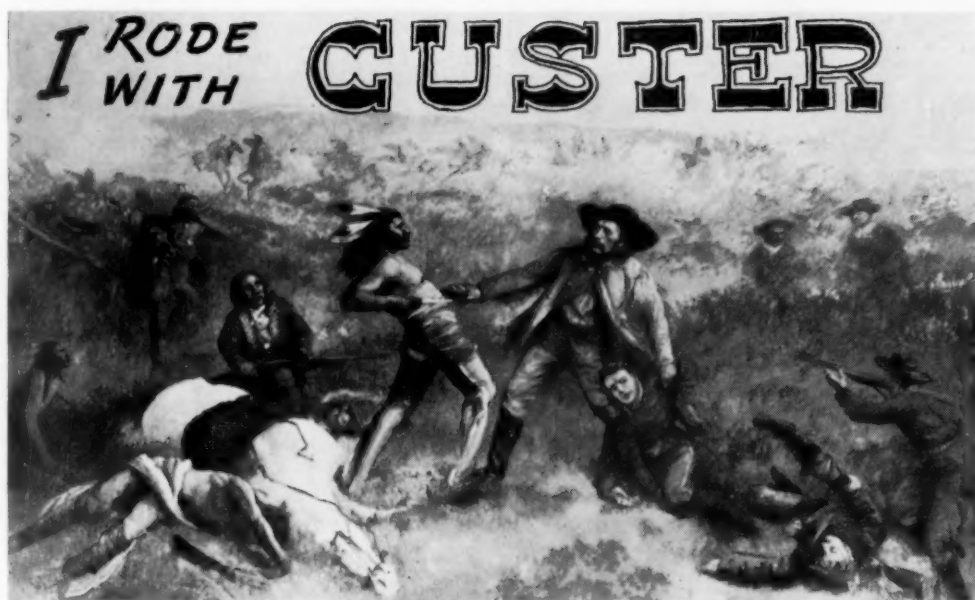
When the rancher brought the carcass into the town of Stanford, it created the kind of sensation that the exhibition of Billy the Kid's head would have made in Santa Fe in the 1880's. The wolf looked as big as a weaned calf. He measured six feet from nose to tail-tip. The shape of his head made some people say that he was part dog, but this could not be proved. His intelligence had been that of a wolf. Despite all the meat he had consumed, he was gaunt. During a six-weeks period of the preceding winter he had killed ten head of registered Herefords. Only the gaunt run and watch, stay alert on the dodge, for years.

Ranchers who paid the reward had Snowdrift mounted. But tradition more than a visible carcass has kept alive the wisest, the cunningest and the most noted wolf that ever ranged west of the Dakotas. No hunter ever out-witted him. Old age and chance combined to end his life.

[THE END]

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY





A bad Custer painting—but no worse than many others—from a mural in the Montana State Capitol at Helena.

Edited by Edgar I. Stewart

Private Edwin Pickard witnessed parts of the terrible massacre at the Little Big Horn in 1876, which decimated the 7th U. S. Cavalry

#### A STATEMENT BY THE EDITORS

"The Custer Massacre" of June 25, 1876, is one of those singular episodes of American history that have been fantastically overplayed. Of course it was a highly dramatic event, but actually of minor significance in the total history of the West. Nevertheless, because of its legendary build-up, the millions of myths, vast popularization, misinformation and misconceptions—plus the bona-fide mysteries surrounding it—the story of Custer and his troops at the Battle of the Little Big Horn will always be of great interest to many, many people.

This magazine would prefer to treat the Custer incident in proper historical perspective; and, at the very most, carry only those infrequent articles of scholarly substance which develop new facts, help clarify important events, or bring into true focus the plethora of perplexity. But this is a pious hope. Much of Custer's Massacre, like the fable of George Washington and the cherry tree, will always be with us. Our readers insist on more Custeriana.

At least Edwin Pickard WAS a survivor. He DID eye-witness parts of the gory battle. He was not in the sacrosanct class of Curley, the nearly inarticulate Crow Scout; or of Comanche, Capt. Keogh's horse—the only ACTUAL, ACCEPTED survivors of Custer's immediate command. Rather he was more in the category of Wm. O. Taylor, who was a cavalry private under Reno at the time of the battle; Gustave Korn, a blacksmith; Peter Thompson and James Watson, who rode with Custer almost up to the fatal hour—but were not there THEN; or such persons as the bewildered Giovanni Martini, who carried Custer's last message to Benteen, and quite a few other "survivors" such as Sergeant Culbertson of Troop A; Ed Davern, Major Reno's orderly; and the other troops and civilian employees who eye-witnessed some phases of the battle, or who were simply "there" on that disastrous two-day occasion—but not WITH Custer on June 25!

The PORTLAND (Oregon) JOURNAL, through an enterprising reporter, Fred Lockley, obtained this information from Edwin Pickard some 53 years after the battle. It was published in five installments, beginning July 31, 1923. Because of the fallability of human memory, Edgar I. Stewart has studied and footnoted the Pickard statement carefully. We trust that our discerning readers will accept this, in context, as just another human document — subject to the vagaries of time, imagination and retelling. It should be digested only when masticated with the studious footnotes of Edgar Stewart. The Pickard account follows:

—THE EDITORS



Edgar I. Stewart, a recognized authority on the Custer battle, has authored many articles and a book on the subject. He is a Professor of History at Eastern Washington College. Prof. Stewart emphasizes that Mr. Pickard was an old man when this statement was made. Even allowing for bad memory, some exaggeration and self-glorification, possibly interlaced with barracks-room tales, certain key portions simply do not ring true. It is hoped that the editing makes this clear to our readers.

"... Even as a little chap I had always wanted to be a soldier. My idea of a soldier was a fine-looking man in a blue uniform, riding a spirited horse, carrying a revolver in one hand and waving his sabre in the other. I thought that would be an ideal life. I went to the recruiting office at Boston and told the recruiting officer I would enlist if I could be assigned to the cavalry. He said it could be arranged; so I enlisted and was sent to Jefferson Barracks at St. Louis, where I was assigned to the Seventh Cavalry, with headquarters at Fort Abraham Lincoln, in Dakota Territory.<sup>1</sup> I was assigned to F troop commanded by Captain George W. Yates.<sup>2</sup>

"This was in the fall of 1875. I reported at Fort Lincoln and put in that winter learning the duties of a cavalryman. It was an intensely cold winter. The troopers when not on guard duty stuck around the stove to keep from freezing to death, and told stories about Indian fighting. The old timers said that about all there was to it was to surprise an Indian village, charge through it, shooting the Indians as they ran, and then divide the tanned buffalo robes and beaded moccasins before burning the

lodges and destroying the supplies. The more I heard the more anxious I was for the coming of spring, for we heard rumors that we were going to put in a very busy spring and summer suppressing the hostile Indians.

"All of the 12 troops of the 7th Cavalry reported at headquarters at Fort Abraham Lincoln in Dakota, and in May, 1876 we started out after Sitting Bull and his band of hostile Sioux. General Terry<sup>3</sup> was in command of the expedition. We marched through the Bad Lands making 15 to 25 miles a day. The reason that we did not make better time was that we had a wagon train of about 100 wagons, each wagon drawn by a six-mule team.<sup>4</sup> We had to build bridges and make roads. The regiment travelled together until we struck the Yellowstone River. We were ferried across the river<sup>5</sup> near the mouth of the Yellowstone, by a steamer on which General Terry and the infantry and artillery were being taken up the Missouri to the mouth of

<sup>1</sup>Located across the Missouri River from the town of Bismarck, Dakota Territory. In the fall of 1875 about 150 new recruits had joined the regiment.

<sup>2</sup>A veteran of the Civil War, Yates' appointment had been secured by Custer at the time the regiment was activated. In the fall of 1875 he commanded the detachment sent to arrest Rain-in-the-Face for the murder of Baliran and Homzinger. Captain Tom Custer made the actual arrest.

<sup>3</sup>Gen. Alfred Terry entered the army from civilian life at the beginning of the Civil War. He distinguished himself at the capture of Fort Fisher, N. C., and became a brigadier-general in the regular army. In 1866 he assumed command of the Department of Dakota with headquarters at St. Paul. In 1876, after Custer incurred the displeasure of President Grant, Terry took personal command of the expedition against the Sioux.

<sup>4</sup>About 114 six-mule teams pulling army wagons, and 37 two-horse contract wagons. In addition there were a number of other vehicles, including ambulances. See Judson E. Walker, *Campaigns of General Custer*, p. 47.

<sup>5</sup>The Seventh Cavalry did not cross the Yellowstone until after the battle. They reached the south bank of the Yellowstone at its confluence with the Powder River on June 11. The march from Fort Lincoln had been entirely overland. It is doubtful if the regiment was within sight of the Yellowstone until the 11th.

<sup>6</sup>This was the river steamer *Far West*, commanded by Captain Grant Marsh, one of the supply boats of the expedition. The platoon of Gatling guns—apparently the "artillery" referred to—and General Terry were not taken up the Missouri. They marched with the Dakota column overland from Fort Lincoln.



An early picture of Gen. Custer with three of his Indian scouts, a white guide, and his dogs. Courtesy Northern Pacific Railroad.

the Yellowstone.<sup>6</sup> We marched along the north bank of the Yellowstone to a point opposite the Rosebud river in Montana.<sup>7</sup>

"General Custer was ordered by General Terry to cross the Yellowstone and proceed up the Rosebud until we came to the divide between the headwaters of the Rosebud and the Little Big Horn rivers, where it was reported the hostile Indians were gathered. We were really on a scouting expedition, for Custer had been instructed to locate the Indians if possible, but not to bring on an engagement.<sup>8</sup> After crossing the Yellowstone river, we made forced marches. We travelled with a pack train, having left our wagons near the mouth of the Rosebud<sup>9</sup> on the Yellowstone. We covered as high as 45 miles a day<sup>10</sup> in hurrying forward to locate the Indians. The last night before reaching the point at which the scouts told us the Indians were located we made an all-night march.<sup>11</sup> I was dead tired and went to sleep several times during the night, nearly falling from my horse.

"Just at dawn our regiment halted and the word went down the line for us to make no noise, as we were close to the Indian camp. The scouts were sent out to locate the Indian village.<sup>12</sup> "Mitch" Boyer<sup>13</sup> was our guide and Custer depended on his reports. Boyer, with the other scouts, soon returned and reported they had located the Indian village on Greasy Grass creek, 5 miles away.<sup>14</sup> Arrangements were at once perfected to attack the village. The entire command was ordered to proceed at a moderate pace toward the village. When we came in sight of the village we found it had been deserted hastily, as the camp fire embers were still burning. We could see that there had been about 800 lodges, that they had been hastily taken down and all had been removed but three.<sup>15</sup> In these three lodges we found the bodies of dead Indians that had been killed in a fight with Crook's men a few days



before. The Indians had left in such a hurry that they had forsaken their dead, a very unusual proceeding.<sup>16</sup> The Indians had gone down Greasy Grass creek. General Custer sent the scouts ahead to

<sup>6</sup> On reaching the Powder River, six companies or troops of the regiment under command of Major Marcus A. Reno made a scout to the south and west. Although Troop F was one of these, Pickard makes no mention of this.

<sup>8</sup> A misconception of Custer's orders.

<sup>9</sup> The wagon train, the band, most of the non-commissioned staff and some additional troopers, probably mostly new recruits, were left at a base camp established at the mouth of the Powder River, rather than on Rosebud Creek.

<sup>10</sup> An exaggeration: on the 22nd the regiment covered 12 miles and 30 miles on the 23rd. On the 24th, including the night march, they covered about 45 miles.

<sup>11</sup> This was not an all night march. It started about 11 P. M. and the troops halted some three hours later. They covered about ten miles.

<sup>12</sup> The scouts had been sent ahead the night before.

<sup>13</sup> "Mitch" Bouyer was a half-breed, Crow or Sioux protege of Jim Bridger and is said to have been one of the few native scouts who could estimate distance accurately in miles.

<sup>14</sup> Some writers insist that the Indians knew this valley as Greasy Grass, because of the luxuriant pasturage. Others maintain that the present Lodge Grass Creek, a tributary of the Little Big Horn, was called Greasy Grass Creek. This last contention has merit. The Crow words for lodge and greasy are very similar. Mr. Pickard apparently uses the term to indicate Sundance or Ash Creek—the present day Reno Creek—down which the regiment rode to the attack.

<sup>15</sup> This was the famous "Lone Warrior Tepee" located at the forks of Reno Creek. Although generally spoken of as the "Lone Tepee" there may have been one more. Mr. Pickard's is the only account that I have seen that puts the number so high.

<sup>16</sup> Actually this was a common Sioux custom. On the morning of June 27th when Gibbons' men arrived on the site of the great Indian village they found the bodies of the warriors killed in the Custer Fight laid out in just this fashion.



Custer as a Lt. Col., 7th Cavalry, in his trophy-be-decked study at Fort Abraham Lincoln about 1875.  
Courtesy Custer Battlefield Museum, Montana.

get in touch with them,<sup>17</sup> while the troops followed the freshly-made trail of the departing Indians. Within an hour<sup>18</sup> we were approaching the Little Big Horn river where Greasy Grass creek flows into it. Boyer, with his scouts, reported to General Custer and said the Indians from the recently abandoned village had joined forces with a much larger village located on the Little Big Horn river. A halt was made, and the campaign formulated, Custer talking the matter over with the other officers.<sup>19</sup> This was in the forenoon of June 26.<sup>20</sup>

"That morning I had been appointed orderly for Captain Yates, in command of F troop. It so happened that F troop was in advance that day, so that our troop was at the head of the column.<sup>21</sup> In my capacity as orderly I was thus within hearing distance of much of the conversation that took place between Custer and the others, as I was riding just ahead of F troop. When Boyer came back and reported to General Custer I heard him say: 'General, there are too many Indians for you to attack.'<sup>22</sup> Custer said, 'There are not too many Indians on the whole North American continent for me to attack with the 7th Cavalry.' Turning to the other officers Custer said, 'From what the scouts tell me the largest

Indian camp on the North American continent is just ahead of us and we are going to attack it.'<sup>23</sup>

"The plan for the attack was brief and Custer did most of the talking. He told Major Reno to take 5 troops<sup>24</sup> and attack the village from the nearest point. He told Major Benteen<sup>25</sup> to take two troops to the rear to guard the pack train.<sup>26</sup> He said 'I will take C. E. I. L and F troops and attack the lower end of the village just as Major Reno starts his attack on the upper end.'<sup>27</sup> Had the

<sup>17</sup> Custer ordered his Indian scouts after the fleeing enemy but they refused to go, so he sent Major Reno's battalion with orders to pursue the enemy and attempt to bring him to battle.

<sup>18</sup> The Lone Tepee stood about 4½ miles from the junction of Reno Creek with the Little Big Horn. While estimates of the officers as to distance varied, it was much less than an hour.

<sup>19</sup> No other account that I have seen mentions any such conference at this time, but such a council would have been natural in the circumstances.

<sup>20</sup> Mr. Pickard is a day off. The regiment reached the Lone Tepee at about two o'clock in the afternoon of the 25th of June.

<sup>21</sup> There is also reason to believe that either Troop E, the gray-horse troop, or Troop I may have been ahead.

<sup>22</sup> Bouyer and the other scouts warned Custer several times that there were large numbers of Indians ahead. It is not improbable that he may have done so again, although as later told by the scouts Bouyer and three of the Crows were some distance ahead of the command at this time.

<sup>23</sup> Custer apparently made some such remark. There is evidence to indicate that it was made the night before at a council of the officers; while other evidence indicates that it was made about the time that Reno diverged.

<sup>24</sup> Reno had three troops, M, G and A.

<sup>25</sup> Benteen was a captain. Not a graduate of the United States Military Academy, he was a Virginian who sided with the north in the Civil War, and attained the rank of Colonel. He was the bitterest critic of Custer in the regiment; with little regard for any of his fellow officers.

<sup>26</sup> Benteen had been given command of a battalion consisting of Troops H, D and K and sent to the left a short time after the regiment crossed the divide. The task of guarding the slow-moving pack train had been given to Captain McDougall, of B troop before the regiment crossed the divide.

<sup>27</sup> Although this is generally assumed to have been Custer's plan, I have found no other record of any such statement at this time.

plan not miscarried the Indians would probably have been defeated, for General Custer planned to keep to the right, over the hills, until he arrived at a point just below the Indian village on the Little Big Horn. On arrival at this point, he planned to cross the river and attack the Indians from the lower end of the village. Major Reno was then instructed to proceed down Greasy Grass creek to where it joined the Big Horn, and he was ordered to cross the Little Big Horn near the mouth of the Greasy Grass creek thus bringing him some distance above the Indian village. His orders were to attack the village at the upper end immediately upon his arrival. General Custer, who had farther to go, said he would proceed with his troop first at a trot and then if necessary at a gallop, so that the two attacks should be simultaneous. He thought that he would be in a position to attack the village by the time Reno reached there.<sup>28</sup> Reno followed his instructions implicitly, but General Custer found that at the point where he had separated to cross the Little Big Horn the cliffs were so precipitous it was impossible to get down to the river. This necessitated a detour which delayed Custer so that his troop had not reached the river when Major Reno was ready to attack.

"As Captain's orderly I had charge of Captain Yates' extra saddle horse,<sup>29</sup> and, as orderly I did not have to ride in the ranks. I rode at the head of the troops so that Captain Yates would be able to change horses if necessary. When we had finally worked our way down the bluffs to the river, General Custer halted his command and told the company commanders to bring their troops into line. We had been marching in columns of fours, so each captain gave the command to his troops 'Four right into line' thus bringing the troops into company front. General Custer rode along the line in front of the troops, giving his final instructions to the company commanders.

"I had been riding at the rear of F troop,<sup>30</sup> but now that we were in company front, I was at the extreme left of the company. General Custer saw me there, leading the extra horse, and said to Captain Yates: 'Better send that man back to the pack train with your horse. He can't accomplish anything in a charge, leading your horse.' Captain Yates turned to me and said, 'Pickard, fall out and report to the pack train.' This was my first Indian fight. I had heard the boys say how the Indians fled at our charge, and how, after the fight, there was always a lot of beautiful tanned buffalo robes and beaded moccasins to be divided among the troopers. I hated to miss the first fight, and I hated to miss getting my share of Indian trophies. Then, too, I felt that my chances were much better with my troop than in making my way alone back to the pack train. I didn't know where the pack train was, but I knew that it was many

<sup>28</sup> This was obvious strategy but it is doubtful if Custer made such statements. His reputation for keeping plans to himself and telling subordinates only what they needed to know, was well-known.

<sup>29</sup> Some of the officers had extra saddle horses. Custer and Reno had an extra horse. Both of these were with the pack train and it seems strange that a similar procedure had not been followed with Captain Yates' extra horse—if he had one.

<sup>30</sup> Mr. Pickard contradicts himself. Earlier he said that he was riding at the head of the column.



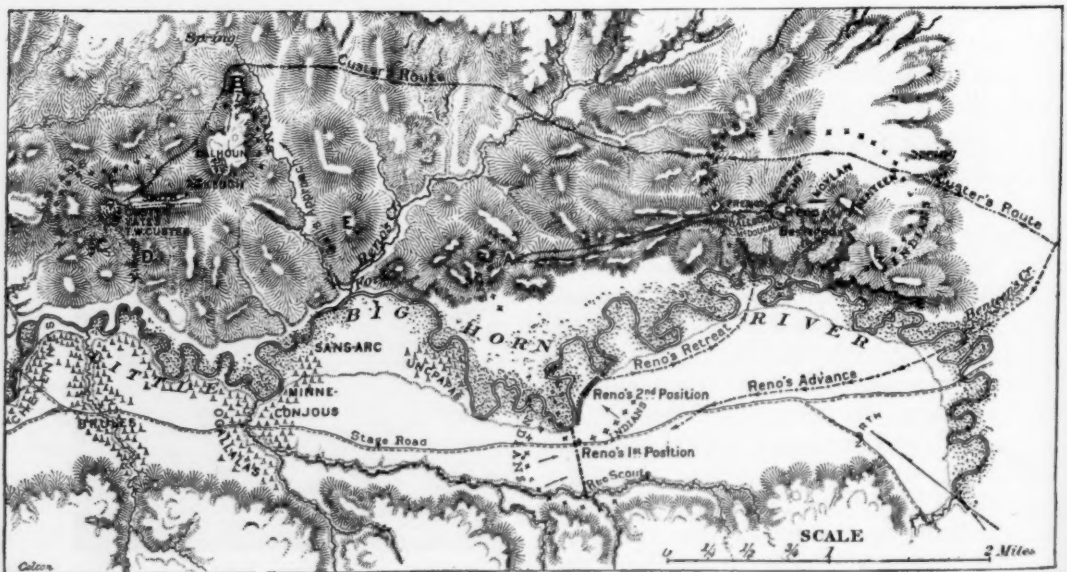
This old photograph is believed to be of Curley, the Custer Scout who survived. Note the buffalo robe coat.



miles in the rear, and that the country was swarming with hostile Indians. I saluted and said, 'Captain, may I have your permission to exchange with someone in the company who is willing to go back? I don't want to miss this fight.' Captain Yates smiled and nodded in assent. One of the men in our troop, who was a new recruit, was a very poor rider and had gone over his horse's head on various practice charges so I went to him and said, 'Let me take your place in the troop and you take my place as orderly and take Captain Yates' extra horse back to the pack train.' He hesitated for a moment, and then said, 'I'd like to do it, all right, but the boys would think I was showing the white feather; I guess I had better not.'<sup>31</sup> When Captain Yates saw that the man I spoke to had shaken his head he told me to report at once to the pack train. As I started away, my bunkie, a good-hearted French-Canadian named Le Roche,<sup>32</sup> said to me 'All right, Ed; if you'll have supper ready for me when we come back I'll bring you a buffalo robe.' I answered, 'All right, Rockie; see that you get a good one,' and trotted off. When I next saw my bunkie

he had been disembowled and scalped and was lying with a group of other members of F troop on the hillside. Captain Yates didn't like to send me back, for he knew how disappointed I was. He said, in a very kindly way, 'Too bad, Pickard; but I guess you'll have to go back.' As I started on the back track, my fellow-troopers started to cross the river. I did not know it at the time, but we discovered later, that where I left them, and where they were going to cross, the river was impassable and that, discovering this fact, they had crossed the river some distance below.<sup>33</sup>

"I had not gone over half a mile when I saw several Indians against the skyline. Just as I caught sight of them they caught sight of me and spread out fan-wise to intercept me. You can believe I stepped on the gas all right. I started as hard as I could go, and as I was well mounted I saw I was gaining and the Indians saw it, too. They fired at me and one of the bullets whistled close to my head. I surely thought I was going to get plugged. As I rode on at full speed I suddenly heard firing. In going forward to attack the village we had kept away from the edge



An old topographic map of the Custer battlefield showing the various troop positions and the Indian encampments. Montana Historical Library collection.



of the breaks above the river, so that we should not be discovered from the Indian village. When I heard the firing I rode about a quarter of a mile to the brow of the hill overlooking the river to see what was going on. I halted before coming up to the upper end of the ravine and crawled the rest of the way to see if there were any Indians near me.<sup>34</sup>

"From where I lay, on the crest of the bluff, I could see a long reach of the Little Big Horn river, across which was a level plateau on which I could see a portion of the Indian village. At the upper end of the village I could see Major Reno's five troops advancing. The shots I heard were fired by Indians who were circling in front of Reno's advancing command. It was a wonderful spectacle.<sup>35</sup> The Indians, lying flat on their horses' backs, were running at full speed across Reno's advancing front, firing at the troopers from under their horses' necks. There were only a few hundred of the Indians who were riding in scattered bunches, and there were also some on the bluffs across the river. Reno's troopers rode steadily forward at a trot, without firing, toward the Indians' lodges, many of which were in a heavy growth of cottonwood timber. As I watched, I saw Reno deploy his men in skirmish line, and a moment or two later he had them reformed in company line. They rode forward a short distance, when they were evidently given the command to dismount and advance on foot as skirmishers. I couldn't understand what was taking place in Major Reno's command, for hardly had the men been dismounted when I saw them once more remount and advance toward the Indian village. As they approached the trees I could see scores of little puffs of white smoke from the guns of the Indians in the woods. From where I was I could hear no commands, but I had seen Reno's command first deployed in line of company front, advance a short distance, then halt, and then take intervals as skirmish-

ers. I had seen them form once more into line of company front, and then I heard the bugle give the signal for 'forward march;' and then I saw the trot become a gallop and then a charge. It was a wonderful spectacle, for Reno's five troops charged across the level space towards the Indian lodges in as perfect alignment as I had ever seen in mounted drill. The Indians, who had been riding in front of our troops, shooting at them, made a hasty get-away, so as not to be between the cross-fire.<sup>36</sup>

"It was evident from where I was that Reno's intention was to charge through the village, for as the pace of the charge increased the line lost its perfect alignment and I thought the troopers were going to ride through the village; but a moment later I saw that our men had ridden into a baited trap. Before starting our expedition we had been furnished with a lot of heavy American horses, which had never been under fire except at drill, and then had become unmanageable. In Reno's command there were at least 100 recruits<sup>37</sup> who were under fire for the first time. Reno was whipped at the first volley fired from the timber. I could see that some of the horses were bolting forward, others ran toward the bluffs, quite a few ran directly through the village. The indecision in charging upon the village had

<sup>34</sup> Peculiar procedure. The command had been delayed and was under attack, with the far bank of the river swarming with Indians!

<sup>35</sup> The roster of the regiment lists no trooper by this name.

<sup>36</sup> There is reason to believe that if Custer's forces ever reached the river, it was at a place impossible to ford, and they had to ride farther downstream under heavy fire from across the stream.

<sup>37</sup> What did he do with the extra horse and what happened to the Indians who were pursuing him?

<sup>38</sup> Not only was Reno in action before Custer ever reached the ford, assuming that he did, but there is almost a complete unanimity of opinion that Reno started his retreat about the time Custer was getting into position to attack.

<sup>39</sup> There is, so far as I am aware, no other record of these successive changes in formation by Reno's men. This is sheer, unadulterated nonsense. Pickard's imagination is running away with him.

<sup>40</sup> The number of recruits in the regiment at the time of the battle is hotly disputed. There probably were not this many in the entire regiment and most of them were left at base camp.

proved fatal. The Indians rode among our men like butchers in a flock of sheep. Our men seemed to be completely demoralized by the surprise of meeting such determined resistance. I could see the Indians riding after our men, shooting them in the back or clubbing them over the head. The boys told me afterwards that someone had given the order for retreat just as they hit the woods, another officer had countermanded it, and in the confusion that ensued it was a case of every man for himself.<sup>38</sup>

"The loss of General George A. Custer and the five troops of the Seventh Regiment with him, was a tragedy the worst part of which was that had Custer's plans been carried out it might have been avoided. Had his plans not miscarried the fight would have resulted in the defeat of the Indians. I watched Reno's men charge, and I saw them waver and then become panic-stricken. You must remember that the 7th had been filled up with recruits, many of whom had never seen a gun fired in action. The new quota of horses also were new at the game.<sup>39</sup>

"As planned, almost immediately after Reno's charge Custer attacked the village at the lower end, but it was too late for the contemplated surprise. Reno was whipped, his men were in flight, and Custer was facing desperate odds. Custer's attack was so furious that it seemed to call for the entire attention of all the Indians, and the main body of Indians, who had been fighting Reno's command, went to the aid of those who were attacking Custer. Major Reno had apparently got lost in the woods and did not appear to take charge of his command for some time.<sup>40</sup> I could see the troopers scrambling through the woods and making for the bluffs. The first man of Reno's command I saw cross the river was a little chap who had enlisted at the same time I did and who had been assigned to H troop.<sup>41</sup> He saw me at the top of the hill and made his way toward me. When he reached me he was almost

breathless from exhaustion. I saw he was wounded in the chest. He told me an Indian had placed his pistol against his blouse and fired. He thought he was shot through the chest. I helped him off his horse. I opened his blouse, tore open his shirt and discovered that the bullet had hit a rib, which it had followed around to his back, the bullet coming out near his shoulder blade. When the Indian had grabbed him by the arm and placed his pistol against his chest and fired, the report of the pistol had frightened the trooper's horse so that it broke away and bolted toward the river.

"Other soldiers joined us where we stood, and some time later Major Reno, who lost his horse in the fight, scrambled up the bluff afoot and took charge of his command.<sup>42</sup> At about the same time Major Benteen arrived with his two troops and the pack train.<sup>43</sup> Reno, Benteen and other officers held a consultation. Benteen ordered his scouts to get in touch with Custer, to see how the fight was going. The scouts came back in a few minutes saying Custer was surrounded and the firing was too heavy to be able to see what was going on.<sup>44</sup> Lieutenant Edgerly, who was in command of D troop, was ordered to go ahead with his company. The rest of the troops followed about 400 yards in the rear. Soon the bullets began coming

<sup>38</sup> Pickard may have witnessed Reno's retreat from the valley, but it is doubtful if the retreat originated in any such mix-up of commands. Both lieutenants, Varnum and DeRudio, seem to have attempted to check the retreat, which degenerated into a mad scramble for safety with each man looking out for himself.

<sup>39</sup> Lieutenant DeRudio's statement indicates that many of the horses were green.

<sup>40</sup> This is a new one! Reno apparently rode at the head of his troops!

<sup>41</sup> H troop was with Benteen's column; not in the fight in the valley. However, it is possible that this trooper could have been on detached service with Reno.

<sup>42</sup> Reno lost both of his horses. I have seen no statement to indicate that he lost one of them at this time. He also seems to have been one of the first up the bluff.

<sup>43</sup> The pack train straggled in gradually. It was probably about an hour from the time Reno reached the bluffs until all of the packs were up.

<sup>44</sup> There is no other record of this. If it happened, Benteen and Reno certainly would not have failed to mention it.

our way and Major Reno halted the main body, Lieutenant Edgerly going on forward. He dismounted his men and they advanced in skirmish line. In a moment or two I saw the men of D company break for their horses and come back, and a moment later the skyline on the bluffs seemed covered with Indians. One of our officers told us to fall back. Edgerly and his troopers covered our retreat, fighting desperately.<sup>45</sup> We fell back, fighting as we retreated, until we came to the little depression from which I had watched Reno's charge.

"We realized that it was a case of fight or die, for we were surrounded and the Indians were advancing upon us in overwhelming force. We could hear the firing of Custer's troops, at first heavy, but gradually diminishing.<sup>46</sup> We were armed with the Springfield carbine. The Indians had Winchesters, needle guns and other rifles which had a greater range than ours. The Indians had also picked up a large number of the guns abandoned by the troopers of Reno's command and had taken from the dead troopers a considerable amount of ammunition. We were hoping all the time that Custer would come to our relief, or at least would send word to us. Several couriers were sent from our command to establish communication with Custer. Some of them returned saying it was impossible to get through; others were killed.<sup>47</sup>

"No sooner had we gathered in the slight depression in the side of the hill than hell broke loose. We hobbled our horses on short halters, and within the circle of our horses we established a hospital for the wounded men. The Indians charged us but we were able to stand off their charge. From Benteen's pack horses we secured boxes of hard tack, sacks of bacon and other supplies, from which we built a make-shift barricade. Some of the men scooped out shallow holes in the hillside from which they fired. Three times during that

afternoon the Indians charged us. I was lying back of a bunch of sagebrush. My back and shoulders were covered with fragments of the sagebrush clipped off by the bullets. Immediately on my left, close enough so that I could reach out and touch him, was a trooper who had dug a shallow pit. As he raised his head to shoot a bullet struck him in the throat and the gushing blood from his severed jugular vein choked him to death. A moment or two later another soldier lifted him out of the depression where he was lying and put his body in front of the hole as a barricade. The second tenant of the barricade laid his gun across the dead man, and as he was sighting his carbine a bullet struck him square between the eyes, killing him instantly. A third trooper, who was without protection, crawled to his hole and used the bodies of both of his fellow troopers as a breastwork, but he also was wounded, and crawled back to the hospital.

"During one of the charges the Indians rode clear through our circle, shooting at us and using their war clubs.<sup>48</sup> I saw something in one of these charges that I shall never forget. A big Sioux warrior swung his club at a sergeant. The sergeant dodged the blow, caught the Indian by the leg, pulled him off his horse and, grabbing him by the scalplock, bent the Indian's head back and then sank his teeth in the Indian's throat. They rolled over and over, but the sergeant never let go his hold till he had bitten through the Indian's neck, severing one of the large arteries. With all his strength the soldier, with his hands under

<sup>45</sup> In its early stages the retirement was apparently covered by Troops D and M. Later it was Lieutenant Godfrey's K troop which, dismounted, checked the Indian advance.

<sup>46</sup> The heavy firing from Custer's direction was heard before, rather than after, Reno's attempted movement downstream.

<sup>47</sup> While there is no other account of this it might be true. But it is probable that Mr. Pickard's memory is playing tricks again.

<sup>48</sup> This is dubious. There is no other account of the Indians managing to break through Reno's lines. Nor is there any record of hand-to-hand fighting on the hill.



Top, one of the most recent paintings, by Harold Von Schmidt, was done in 1950 for *ESQUIRE* magazine. In most respects it is one of the best ever done, although historians will argue as to accuracy.

HISTORICAL FACT SURRENDERED IN MOST

## Custer Paintings

TO FANCIFUL MISREPRESENTATIONS



Left, this fanciful primitive painted by George H. Ellsburry was apparently based on an account of the massacre in the *CHICAGO DAILY NEWS* of Feb. 10, 1892. This copy was presented to the Montana Historical Society in 1933.



Right, John Mulvaney called this distorted presentation "Custer's Last Rally." The original painting was exhibited for many years at the Atlantic City Pier, N.J., and the auditorium in Pittsburg of the H. J. Heinz Co. Below, is Paxson's famed blood-drenched canvas.



the Indian's chin, forced his head back till he had broken his neck. The rattle of the revolvers, carbines and Winchester's was almost continuous, and the air was full of smoke and dust thrown up by the hooves of the horses as they charged among us.

"On the last charge that afternoon I saw, looming up through the dust and smoke a big Indian on a horse, aiming directly for me. My carbine and revolver were both empty. As his horse saw me it swerved slightly to avoid stepping on

me, and with all his force the Indian swung his war club to strike me on the head. I saw the blow coming, so I threw myself back and threw up my right arm to guard my head. The round stone at the end of his war club struck my elbow. One of the other troopers near me shot the Indian through the head and he slid off his horse, falling beside me.<sup>49</sup> I tried to pick up my gun, but my fingers had no feeling and would not close. During the rest of the day I shifted my gun to the opposite shoulder, firing with my left hand.



"At dusk the Indians withdrew toward the river, leaving a few Indians to keep up an intermittent fire. From where we were on the hillside we could see the Indian village. They were dancing around a fire. We found out later they had captured some prisoner whom they were torturing.<sup>50</sup> Next morning at 'Cheyenne reveille'—that was our daybreak, for the Indians used to attack us usually at daybreak—the Indians charged us first on horseback and then on foot, but we stood them off. The wounded were suffering with thirst and volunteers were called for to go down to the river and get water. Another trooper and myself hung some canteens over our shoulders and took camp kettles and made our way to the river. The trooper with me was shot and fell into the water and was drowned.<sup>51</sup> I managed to fill my kettles, and as I started back a bullet broke one of the kettles, so that I got back with only one kettle of water. Several other men volunteered to get water and went down to the river with camp kettles and buckets but every time volunteers would go to the river it would result in some of them being wounded; so the water was given only to the badly wounded. Our throats were parched, the smoke stung our nostrils, it seemed as if our tongues had swollen so we couldn't close our mouths, and the heat of the sun seemed fairly to cook the blood in our veins.

"After one or two unsuccessful charges in the early morning of the second day the Indians seemed to withdraw but we thought they were hoping we would abandon our position so they could attack us to better advantage. About 11 o'clock that morning we saw a cloud of dust stirred up by a big body of moving men. We supposed the Indians had received reinforcements and were going to attack us in overwhelming force. We made the best preparations we could to withstand them; but I guess most of the men felt this was our last stand, and the sooner it was over the better. As the

cloud of dust came nearer, suddenly through the dust we saw a bit of color, and a moment later we saw it was Old Glory. We tried to cheer, but instead, many of the men broke down and cried. It was General Terry's troops, making a forced march to join Custer's command.<sup>52</sup>

"In a few moments Terry's men were with us. They told us they had passed over Custer's battlefield<sup>53</sup> in coming to us, and that there wasn't a single survivor of the fight. The Indians lost over 700 of their number.<sup>54</sup> We never learned how many Indians were engaged in the fight, but they were certainly in excess of 5,000.<sup>55</sup> What was left of the 7th Regiment joined Terry's command. We went to where Custer and Reno had separated.

<sup>50</sup> Most accounts say only one dead Indian was left on the field because he had fallen so close to Benteen's lines that it was impossible to recover his body. Mr. Pickard's account may be true. Lieutenant DeRudio said that when he joined the command on the night of the 26th after hiding in the valley the better part of two days, he stumbled over the body of a dead Indian and the inference is that it was inside the lines. Sergeant Culbertson also told of seeing Girard scalping a dead Indian on the morning of the 27th.

<sup>51</sup> The Indians deny taking any prisoners and there is no evidence of torture.

<sup>52</sup> There were many attempts to get water for the wounded. The trooper could have been Pvt. Tanner of M troop.

<sup>53</sup> This was Gibbons' column of five companies of the Seventh Infantry and four troops of the Second Cavalry. It was accompanied by General Terry and his staff, and included the batteries of Gatling guns which had come from Fort Lincoln with the Dakota column detached from Custer's command at the mouth of the Rosebud as apt to impede his progress.

Mr. Pickard has telescoped the events of two days into one. The battle in which Custer's command was annihilated, was fought on the 25th. During that afternoon and evening Reno and Benteen were besieged on the bluffs. The next day they were besieged and under heavy fire until late afternoon when the Indians withdrew up the valley of the Little Big Horn. Gibbons' men rescued Reno's command about ten o'clock on the morning of the 27th.

<sup>54</sup> The bodies of Custer's command were discovered by Lieutenant Bradley and a scouting detail of the Seventh Infantry. The members of Terry's command did not pass over the Custer battlefield.

<sup>55</sup> The Indian losses are unknown but it is doubtful if they were anywhere near as heavy as here indicated.

<sup>56</sup> No one knows how many Indians were in the fight. Estimates range from 1,400 to 9,000. Probably the best statement is that attributed to Captain Benteen. He is supposed to have said that he did not know how many of the "miscreants there were, but there were more than enough."

Custer, as I told you, had intended to attack the Indian village at the same time Reno did, but Custer's enforced delay in finding a place to get across the river had resulted in Reno's contact with the Indians. We could see where Custer had charged through the Indian village. The first charge was what had drawn the Indians away from their slaughter of Reno's men, for Custers' men, when surrounded, had charged once more. We could tell by the fall of men and horses that they had charged in company formation. When Custer found he was not receiving support from Reno he retreated across the river,<sup>56</sup> but the Indians, believing he would do this, had sent 500 Cheyenne braves across the river to lie in wait for him, and it was here that Custer and his men made their last stand. We could see from the empty shells, where the Indians had lain in ambush and had fired on Custer's men as they came out of the river.<sup>57</sup>

"No man who saw Custer's battlefield could believe anything but that Custer's men fought with courage, coolness and desperation. The only live thing we found on the battlefield was Custer's

Kentucky thoroughbred, Comanche.<sup>58</sup> Comanche was wounded, but lived for many years. You often hear that the Indians scalped all the men of Custer's command. This is not true, for many of the men, particularly the recruits, had had their hair clipped just before starting on the campaign, and an Indian will not take a scalp unless the man's hair is long enough to make his scalp worth taking.

"Custers' men were not buried until three days after the battle. It made me sick to see my fellow-troopers of F troop lying on the hillside, disemboweled, with stakes driven through their chests, with their heads crushed in, and many of them with their arms and legs chopped off. This was largely the work of the squaws.

"Custer was not scalped.<sup>59</sup> You will see pictures of Custer's last stand in which Custer is represented as having long hair, but this is a mistake. His hair had been cut just before starting on the campaign, a few weeks before. You will also notice in pictures of Custer's last stand that he is waving a sword as the Indians charged him. Swords were used for dress occasions and were not taken on campaigns.<sup>60</sup> What Custer used, until he was shot down, was a revolver, and he may have used, and probably did use, the carbine of some fallen soldier.

"Our regiment prior to the battle which resulted in the annihilation of five troops of Custer's command was at peace strength, each company having 65 to 75 troopers. Each troop was at once recruited to full strength of 100 men. Besides myself there were two men left in F troop—Sergeant Davern,<sup>61</sup> who had been with the pack train,—and one of the privates who had been left at headquarters. Ninety-seven men were added to our company to build it up to full strength. Late that fall we started out to locate the hostile bands, but they had scattered and we were unable to come in contact with them."

[THE END]

<sup>56</sup> Reno and Benteen at first declared their belief that Custer had penetrated the village only to be driven out immediately. Later on, Benteen changed his mind. Many students of the battle doubt if Custer ever attempted to cross the river.

<sup>57</sup> This is a whole new theory of the battle.

<sup>58</sup> Comanche was not Custer's horse, but rather that of Captain Keogh of Troop I.

<sup>59</sup> Probably for the simple reason that his hair was too short and that he was getting bald. His body was stripped, and there is a conflict of evidence as to whether it was mutilated. Some believe that the story of his body not being mutilated was a deliberate lie, fabricated to spare the feelings of Mrs. Custer. In the pamphlet by Dr. Marquis, *She Watched Custer's Last Battle*, Kate Bighead, a Cheyenne woman, mentions certain minor mutilations.

<sup>60</sup> The sabres of the regiment had been packed and left at the base camp. According to all available testimony there was not a sabre in the command.

<sup>61</sup> Sergeant Edward Davern was with Reno in the valley and not with the pack-train. From a study of the regimental roster it would appear that about 25 members of Troop F survived the battle, in addition to several others who had been left at the base camp. Just what these 25 were doing during the battle is not known.



## JADED

### DOC EARTHART DIDN'T QUITE GET THE PASSENGERS THROUGH IN AN ILL-FATED "JERKY" STAGE RIDE IN 1875.

**S**TAGE COACH travel in the Frontier West was not comfortable under even the most ideal conditions. The operators of the hard-riding vehicles depended upon mail and freight for their profits. Consideration of passengers was secondary, very much as with the railroads in later years. In bad weather a stage coach journey in the territories could be down-right hazardous. This somewhat comic-tragic account of a stage coach trip from Boulder to Helena, M. T., on November 20, 1875, while probably not typical, is illustrative of the hardships and vicissitudes of such a journey.<sup>1</sup>

With the Union Pacific-Central Pacific transcontinental railroad having been completed in 1869, Wells, Fargo & Company, which operated a net of stage lines estimated at 35,000 miles, began to dispose of its transportation facilities. Thus, in August of that year, John T. Gilmer, Monroe Salisbury and Orange Salisbury bought from Wells, Fargo the Overland Route extending from Corinne, Utah—fabled station on the Union Pacific—to the booming gold camp of Helena, in rich Last Chance Gulch.

By 1875, a spur of the U. P. railroad had been extended as far north as Franklin, Idaho, just beyond the Utah border.<sup>2</sup> The southern terminus of the Overland Route, accordingly, moved from Corinne to Franklin. Scheduled time for the daily stage run from Franklin to Helena, in summer, was a rapid 3½ days and in winter it was 5 days; a schedule set by contract with the post office department. Today the scheduled time by rail between these two points is a day and a half, with considerable stopover.

The northern end of the line was operated out of Helena. A coach skinner would drive south from Last Chance Gulch, lay over at Whitehall and handle the next coach north from there.

For two or three days prior to November 20 the weather had generally been stormy and windy throughout Montana Territory. Although there had been only about an inch of snow, the road from Whitehall was heavy. The snow was

Jerry Richards is a young Helena attorney. This is his first venture in historical writing, prompted when he became intrigued by "the story behind the legal verbiage" in some of the old Territorial code books. We hope he becomes intrigued again in some of the significant old trials over mining claims, water rights, eminent domain and range rights.



BY J. R. RICHARDS

## JOURNEY

blown into heavy drifts in some places and in others the road was bare. Neither sleighing nor wagonning was good. November 20 was clear and still, although quite cold.

Samuel "Doc" Earhart, a veteran coachman driving the north-bound overland, was supposed to leave Whitehall at about 5:00 A. M. As he was still working the summer schedule he would arrive in Helena about twelve hours later. In actuality "Doc" didn't get away from Whitehall until 9:00 A. M. and was still four hours late when he got into Boulder at 2:00 P. M. It is quite possible that, because of the bad weather of the past few days, this particular trip was over twenty-four hours late.

At Boulder, "General" Charles Smith the Gilmer and Salisbury stocktender there was awaiting transportation to town at Deacey's store and saloon. He had been sickly for some time and had been instructed to go to Helena to see Dr. Glick, the company doctor. Doc, Smith and Tony Gerrick had a drink together and Doc bought a half-pint of Hostetter Bitters. While they were tossing off their drink, C. W. Higley, superintendent of the Rumley Mine, was accepted for passage to Helena and went back home to get his overcoat. They picked Higley up at his house, got away from Boulder at about 3:00 and drove north through the Boulder Valley.<sup>3</sup>

The stage route between Boulder and Helena followed fairly closely the same route as the main road does today and then, as now, the snow was bad on

Boulder Hill (then known as Prickley Pear Divide) during cold weather. Thus, in such weather, a sleigh was used for the trip over the hill. The sleigh, a rude wooden open box with loose boards thrown in for seats and set on these foot-wide runners, travelled back and forth between the southern foot of Prickley Pear Divide and Beavertown.

Beavertown is no longer in existence—the only reminder of it being the name of the creek along which the highway runs, Beavertown Creek—but it was located north of the divide and approximately three miles south of Jefferson City. Beavertown was the meeting place for the northbound and southbound stages, both of which used the same

<sup>1</sup> The primary source of the material in this article is from the dusty files of old Montana Territorial lawsuits, principally the Transcript on Appeal, Higley vs. Gilmer, 3 Montana 433; the second appeal of this case. Evidence contained in this old transcript was checked against that given in the original case, Higley vs. Gilmer, 3 Montana 90. The description of the sleigh used to cross the Prickley Pear Divide is from the Transcript on Appeal in Ryan vs. Gilmer, 2 Montana 517. Background material from *The Montana Frontier* by Merrill G. Burlingame helped to round-out the picture of the Overland Route.

<sup>2</sup> As the railroads crept across the West, the stage lines died. The time of the greatest prosperity of Montana stage lines was at the time of this event. When the Northern Pacific railroad was completed across the territory in 1881, horse transport suffered a death blow. When the Great Northern railroad came through in 1892 to Idaho—and was completed to the west coast a year later, their extinction was completed.

<sup>3</sup> Although care has been taken to insure usage of correct proper names, in certain cases it proved impossible. For instance, McFall's name is spelled "McPhail," and "McPhale" at various places in the two legal transcripts. In such cases the spelling used is that which seems to be most proper through internal evidence in the two transcripts. Generally speaking, spellings given by the reporter in the second trial, are preferred.

sleigh. After the northbound passengers, mail and freight had been hauled to Beavertown they would embark on the stage which had been driven there from Helena. When the southbound Overland got across the divide it would go to Whitehall<sup>4</sup> in the same coach that had left there that morning. When the stages were running on schedule, the meeting place was Beavertown; when they were late the meeting place was at the head of Boulder Valley on the south side of the divide.

On this cold November 20th, when the Helena-bound stage reached the head of the valley, they met the southbound Overland. By the time they had changed horses, passengers, freight and mail and had had several drinks all around, it was about 5:00 P. M. and getting dark. Chris Kasuba, the driver of the southbound, and McFarland, the Wells, Fargo messenger on that stage, both had bottles of whiskey. Doc, the driver of the northbound, brought out his "bitters" and all had drinks freely. In later testimony when asked, under a great deal of pressure, "You mixed that together and made a kind of cocktail. Haven't you learned that it is very dangerous to mix different kinds of liquor and bitters?" The driver of the southbound answered, "Well, we had to do the best we could; that was all we had."

When the stages parted, Tony Gerrick, who apparently was only out for the ride—and the drinks—returned to Boulder. Doc and his passengers, Smith and Higley, crossed the range and arrived at Beavertown at about 6:00 or 6:30 P. M. This was the usual lunch stop on the Helena bound stage but on this evening they had supper there.

The coach used on this route, and pretty generally throughout the mountainous frontier, was called a "jerky." Built the same as the Concord coach at the shops of the company at Corinne, it was slung about 6 inches lower for better stability with heavier wheels. It was theoretically possible to squeeze eight

passengers onto such a coach; six riding on the two facing seats inside, and two riding with the driver on the boot. Such a coach could be pulled by either two or four horses. Usually, in the mountains, four were employed.

Two new passengers boarded the coach at Beavertown, when it left there at about 8:00 P. M. One of them Levi Larkin, was a colored man, who had, at one time or another, been a jockey, mule-trader, foot racer and squirrel hunter; but at present and later was to earn his living as a cook. He was bound for Helena. By this time the drinks Doc had imbibed were affecting him to some extent. Usually a quiet man, he was now boisterous and gay. When the other prospective passenger, Mrs. Henry, asked him for passage to Helena he told her she had better not get on the coach, saying, "I am liable to turn over two or three times before I get to town. I am liable to break your damn neck." As prophets go, he was amazingly accurate. Subsequently Doc denied that he was drunk at Beavertown, but admitted that he may have been under the influence of alcohol—a fine point.

They changed horses at Beavertown, leaving the two-horse team they had been driving, and picking up a four-horse team. The ebullient driver started his team at a dead run. But although they were out of liquor, it took them some time to get to Jefferson City,<sup>5</sup> their next stop.

At Jefferson the coach stopped at the post office. Smith, who as a fellow employee had been riding on the boot with the driver, hot-footed it down the street to get a bottle. He returned with a half-pint of whiskey in a "long-necked champagne bottle."

Here four men, Alexander McDonald, McFall, McKinney and J. H. King, were waiting for passage to Helena. King was informed that, with seven passengers and the driver, the coach was full. Fortunately for himself, he was unable to get aboard.

It was the rule of the company that passengers paid their fare, not to the driver, but to the agent of the company nearest to the point where they embarked, except on very short hauls. Smith was riding free as an employee of the company; Larkin was riding free because one of the Salisburys had an interest in the Comet mine where he was cook; the fare of Mrs. Henry and Higley became due and payable when they arrived at Jefferson, where June Sanders had been appointed agent just a couple of weeks previously. Sanders had been appointed for this very reason: A good many miners working in the Boulder Valley had been riding free on the coach by dropping off at the outskirts of Helena and walking into town. Higley refused to pay his \$3 when dunned by Sanders. Sanders, who was actually a good friend of Higley's, threatened to throw him off the coach but Higley simply said, "You couldn't do it; it takes a good man to do that" and got back in the coach, telling Mrs. Henry, who had already paid and remained in the coach, that he would not pay "the suckers."

The three new passengers had all been drinking before they boarded the coach. The stage left Jefferson about 9:00 P. M. with McDonald, Smith and Doc, the driver, on the boot. McFall, a blacksmith who was agreed by everyone to be quite drunk, and the others were inside. After they started, Smith passed his bottle and McKinney brought out a set of bag-pipes and began to play, or at least he "tried to play." The others, inside and out, began to whoop it up.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Brooks had built the stage station here, some 4 miles north of present Whitehall, on the freight road between Virginia City and Fort Benton, about 12 years earlier. He named it Old Whitehall after his home in England.

<sup>5</sup> Like Boulder, Jefferson City came into being in 1864 as a stage station; just as did Montana City further north. The latter was also a short-lived camp. But Jefferson was the gateway to Corbin and Wickes, in a rich quartz lode gold and silver mining district which eventually boasted of such mines as the Alta and Gregory which produced more than \$40 million in ore.



About six miles north of Jefferson, with the horses galloping "like as if they were running from Indians" and the coach buttoned down tight, the driver suddenly shouted, "Look out, boys, I think we are going over!" And over they went. At this point the road was on a dug bank; dirt had been dug from the bank and thrown down to form a road bed. The road had not been levelled too carefully and there was still quite a slope. The lead horses held to the road but the front of the coach slipped over and pulled the wheel horses down. The coach landed on its right side. Inside passengers crawled out through the left door. Apparently no one was hurt but Mrs. Henry. The men soon righted the coach without trouble, not even having to unload any of the mail, and started off again. Mrs. Henry was left behind at the Winter's farmhouse.

About two and a half miles from the place where Mrs. Henry was let out, the crew arrived at Hot Springs. Here McDonald, who had been sitting on the boot with just a summer coat on, and McKinney, the bag-piper, disembarked;



This early stagecoach photo, near Last Chance Gulch, depicts what is purported to be a "jerky" or mountain Concord coach; and like the spirited water color by C. M. Russell on page 30, it indicates that six horse teams were the rule, rather than exception in the rugged country between Virginia City and Fort Benton

although they had originally intended to ride through to Helena. It was quite cold; but probably the increased hazards, even more than the cold, influenced the two passengers.

The coach travelled the half-mile from Hot Springs to Clancey City in good time, arriving at the latter place about 10:00 P. M. As usual, they were out of liquor. When the coach stopped at Crane's store, which was also the post office, Higley walked down to Hill's saloon and paid 54¢ for a pint of whiskey. While there he also had a few drinks. Alexander McKay and Finley McMaster boarded the coach here. When it left, about 11:00 P. M., Smith the stocktender, and Doc the driver, were alone on the boot. There were five passengers inside.

Four or five miles later the coach roared in to Ten-Mile House, so called because it was about that distance from Helena. Here they stopped to change horses. The new wheel horses were "Ben" and "Bob," an old reliable stage team purchased with the route in 1869. The leaders were a sorrel extra team, rented because of the bad weather. From here, the road which followed the rolling flanks of the hills south and east of Helena, was hard to follow and when the coach stopped a few minutes later to fasten a loose trace, Higley, who claimed to be more familiar with the road, took Smith's place on the boot and Smith moved inside.

By the time they left Ten-Mile House, or about midnight, it was bitter cold. There was a heavy frost in the air, almost like a fog. It clung to the whiskers and "eye-winkers" of Higley and Doc, exposed as they were.

At 12:30 they rolled into Montana City. Here the only stop was to replenish the liquor supply. Higley bought a pint of whiskey in a "stolen" bottle at Schier's saloon—waking up Schier to get it.

They travelled quietly for about an hour to within about two and a half miles from Helena, when disaster struck again.

The moon was not yet up and the night was dark. The carriage lamps, which, under optimum conditions would only cast their rays about eight feet, had burned out long ago. They had not been relighted. It is problematical, due to the heavy frost in the air, whether their illumination would have done any good.

The road could not be seen ahead of the horses. It was even difficult to see it by looking behind, or at the ground directly below the boot. A line of telegraph poles paralleled the road but due to low visibility was of no assistance. Finally Higley informed the driver that he was off the road. Doc insisted that he was not. Higley insisted that he surely was.

At the point where Higley had said they were off the road, the driver, instead of crossing a ravine had mistaken it for the road and turned down it. The horses were at full trot. When they got



about 100 or 150 yards down the ravine they hit a "sidling" spot and pitched over.

Higley was thrown down the hill some twenty-five feet. He broke both bones in one leg. Doc managed to hang on. The coach passengers were all severely jolted and tossed about, but only Smith and McMaster were injured. Smith received severe lacerations about the head and McMaster's collar bone was broken. Larkin was the last passenger to crawl out of the coach. He later said, "... they had me underneath that time; I couldn't get out; there was a heavy drunken man on top of me; a pretty big fellow too!"

This time there were only three able-bodied men available to right the coach, with Smith, McMaster and Higley *hors de combat*. Of those that were uninjured, McFall was conceded to be really drunk and it is likely that Doc was feeling the effects of all the liquor he had drunk. Whether it was for this reason or because they were so close to Helena, no real effort to right the coach was made. After a few minutes Larkin unhitched one of the lead horses and set off astride it for assistance. As he left, Doc said to him, "When you get to town don't tell them I am drunk for 'Gods sake'."

Meanwhile, Higley with his broken leg, had crawled part of the way back up the hill. McMasters and the driver carried him up to the coach and laid him on his buffalo robe. The driver later took off his own buffalo overcoat and wrapped it around Higley. Higley then drank practically all of the pint of whiskey they had bought in Montana City.

During the nearly two hours that they waited for help to arrive, Smith lay on the ground. After at first crying that he had been killed he later quieted down. McFall, whom apparently nothing could sober up, stumped around through the snow looking for one of his boots which had been lost in the upset. McKay grew tired of waiting and walked into town.

Eventually Doc, and those who could give him some help, was able to right the coach. When assistance arrived in

SUMMER, 1954

WELLS-FARGO AND COMPANY.  
Virginia City, Montana,  
TO  
NEW YORK  
Via Union Pacific Railroad, and Chicago and  
North Western, P. T. W. and C., and  
Atlantic City Line.  
Form A 21 7/7/75 NEW YORK.

WELLS-FARGO AND COMPANY.  
One Seat-From  
Virginia City, Montana,  
TO  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD.  
One Seat-From  
TO OMAHA.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

PASSENGER TRANSFER COMPANY.  
Omaha Ticket-ONE SEAT-From  
Omaha to Council Bluffs.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN R. R.  
One Seat-From  
Council Bluffs to Chicago.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

Pittsburgh, Fort Wayne and Chicago R. R.  
One Seat-From  
Chicago to Pittsburgh.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

PENNSYLVANIA CENTRAL R. R.  
One Seat-From  
Pittsburgh to Harrisburg.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

ALLENTOWN LINE, (W. L. V. E. R. R. Y.)  
One Seat-From  
Harrisburg to New York.  
Issued by Wells, Fargo and Company.  
*He E. Novels*  
Gen. Tkt. Agt.  
Form A 21 NEW YORK.

Wells-Fargo & Co's., Virginia City stage office offered tickets from that historic mining camp all the way to New York City, for \$171.75, although most of the travel after leaving the frontier, was by six different rail lines. This is the ticket form.



This old plate from the Montana Historical Society files gives a more detailed view of the sturdy features of the old Concord stagecoach. Note the extra cargo space available on top and in the "boot" at rear.

the form of a two-horse sleigh and a two-horse wagon, Doc was trying to reload the mail and baggage into the coach. The impression that those coming from Helena received upon arriving on the scene was that "they were all drunk, none of them could stand up." "Doc's loading efforts were futile." One of the men from town "loaded the coach as no one there was capable of doing it." Whether it was the lengthy exposure to 30° below zero weather (for such the temperature proved to be at Parchen's corner in downtown Helena), or whether it was excessive drinking, they were all done in.

Higley was quickly loaded into the sleigh and taken directly to the St. Louis Hotel. In the morning Dr. Glick, a Gilmer and Salisbury physician, set his leg, and he was taken to St. John's Hospital. He was in and out of the hospital for six months. Higley's action for damages against the stage company later occasioned one of the bitterest legal fights in the history of Montana. The trial resulted in a \$5,000 verdict for him. The Supreme Court, however, reversed the verdict and ordered a new trial. At the second trial Higley's lawyer argued to the jury that Gilmer and Salisbury were a grasping monopoly; that they had just doubled the fare to Butte via Deer Lodge (raising it to \$10) after having bought out all competition; that they would undoubtedly appeal to the Montana and United States Supreme Court. And in

view of all the trouble, expense and delay Higley was being put to, "a verdict for twice the sum of the former one would not more than make them whole." The second jury accommodatingly brought in a verdict for \$10,000. The verdict, this time, was affirmed on a technicality.

Smith, who was already sick, wound up in the hospital where he was treated both for his wounds and for dropsy. We find him testifying for the company, who had been paying his hospital and doctor bills, at both trials.

McMaster's broken collar bone apparently healed rapidly and well. He settled with the company for injuries and later migrated to Canada.

Mrs. Henry, having arrived at an amicable settlement for her hurts, was friendly to the company at Higley's action.

Larkin, the colored man, testified for Higley, but probably did him more harm than good, because he was so obviously prejudiced against the stage company.

Doc, the driver, was apparently a good one, despite the mishaps encountered on the 20th of November, 1875. Several years later, when the Higley case was tried for the second time, he was still driving stage for the company.

At any rate, because of the existence of old court records, we learn considerably of the rigors of early stage travel. Perhaps, to some extent, every journey was a jaded one in that rugged period. But beyond that, this, perhaps, is the first case of drunken driving on record in Montana. [END]

# *The Story Behind Charlie Russell's Masterpiece: "Waiting For A Chinook"*

*By Wallis Huidekoper*

In a neat glass case in the Charles M. Russell Room of the new State Historical Building in Helena is a very small water color painting, "Waiting for a Chinook." This sketch is not remarkable as an art form (although veterinarians regard the anatomy of the animal as perfect) but it holds an historical place that can not be duplicated. It is the first publicly recognized colored drawing of that great portrayer of western life—the artist of whom Montanans are so proud—Charles Marion Russell.

The writer had the good fortune to own this primitive painting for a period of more than thirty years. But considering self ownership as selfish, it was released in order that the people of Montana might have a share in seeing and enjoying it. The authentic story of this picture, of which there have been many distortions, follows:

Russell was sixteen years old when he left home in St. Louis, in 1880, and came by train to Utah and then by stage to Montana Territory via the old gold route and Beaverhead River to Helena. He had visions of a wild and open country; and he found it. There was plenty of excitement. The buffalo had not been annihilated; wolves and all other wild game was abundant; the Indians were still primitive; larger ranch outfits were driving huge trail herds from Texas; gold mining was still operative. Besides the strong, self-willed and well-rooted citizens, a drifting element existed, consisting of trappers and traders, wolfers and hunters, saloon-and-dive-keepers, gamblers, wood cutters for river steamers,

freighters, cattle rustlers, horse thieves and outlaws. It was a jackpot gathering. Into all this stepped the young man; already enhanced with much wordly knowledge and a keen sense of observation, backed by an extraordinary ability to sketch and draw. During this period, and later as a cow-puncher, Russell imbibed the atmosphere and spirit of the early west and its unique characters which he afterwards reproduced so wonderfully on paper and canvas.

Charlie's first location in Montana was in the lovely Judith River country. Here, for a couple of years, he herded sheep, cooked, and fraternized with hunters and trappers. Then he started working for the big cow outfits. He remained a cowboy until his marriage in 1896. His wife then took him seriously in hand and put him to work with brush, palette and easel. During his cowboy days Russell never was rated a top hand, preferring to stand guard with beef herds and wrangle saddle horses; so he could loaf, visit, lie around camp and sketch, or model the piece of wax he always carried in his pocket for this purpose.

Montana is capable of producing demoralizing weather. The winter of 1886-7, when livestock interests sustained such heavy losses and a severe financial setback, was one. I do not believe this winter was much more severe than several others, but stockmen were improvident in winter feeding, expecting livestock to sustain themselves through grazing alone. "The Hard Winter" started the middle of November and continued with Arctic severity until the end

of February — one hundred days of crusted and lasting snow, piled high and impassable. Grazing was impossible. Cattle perished by the thousands. Some herds were completely wiped out.

During 1886 Russell worked for two cattle owners living in Helena, Stadler and Kaufman, who ran some five thousand head of cattle in the Judith Basin near the present site of Utica postoffice. Their brand was a Bar R on the right thigh. Their foreman and range manager was Jesse Phelps, a good stock-hand who lived on his own ranch, the O. H. Russell apparently spent the greater part of this winter at the O. H. ranch, for he was out of a job and short of money. He was there later in the winter, when Kaufman wrote to Phelps asking about the condition of the cattle. The night this letter was received, Phelps and Russell were seated together at the ranch bunk house table discussing what kind of answer should be sent "K", as they called him. Phelps said "I'll have to write to Louie but I hate to tell him how tough it is." To which Charlie remarked, "I'll draw you a picture to go with your letter." This he did the next morning, portraying an old cow visible from the ranch window. The work was done on a piece of pasteboard taken from the cover of a collar box and was painted with cheap water colors. When shown to Phelps, he remarked, "Hell, there is no letter needed. That picture tells the story better than I can write it." There was, however, a short note enclosed.

Charlie called the subject "Waiting for a Chinook." It was never named by him "The Last of 5000". Where the secondary caption—thereafter so overused—came from, is not known.

At the time, Louis Stadler and L. E. Kaufman conducted a butcher shop on Edwards Street, on the site of the present Eddy Bakeries plant. Ben Roberts had a harness shop directly across the street, where the Marlow theater now is. Kaufman took the picture over to show it to

Roberts, a close friend of Russell's. (Ten years later Russell not only met "the girl" but later married her in Roberts' house in Cascade.)

Roberts, wanted the picture badly and Kaufman, considering it of no great value, presented it to him about a year afterwards, probably in 1888. Then, for many years, it lay around Roberts' shop, becoming soiled, fly-blown and bent. In 1913, Roberts needing money, decided to sell it. The writer was, fortunately, in Helena at that time and was offered the picture for \$500. But my answer was "Not interested." I did, however, offer Ben a modest sum which he refused. As he walked away I called to him that I was leaving for my ranch on the seven o'clock train next morning and my offer would still be good.

He was at the train next morning. I paid him by check and took the little painting with me to the Musselshell River Ranch.

On my next trip to Chicago I took "Waiting for a Chinook" to the O'Brien galleries. There it was cleaned, pressed and backed. I had an appropriate frame made but did not put the picture in it then. Later in the year when I went to Great Falls, I showed it to Charlie Russell.

"Well Huide, you have the little old picture," he said. "I am glad, but where did you get it?" I told him the story and, as there was no writing on the drawing, I asked him to write something and sign it. I wanted it authenticated. "What shall I write?" he asked. "Anything you may think of, Charlie," I replied.

After rolling a cigarette and taking a puff or two, Russell sat down at his table while his wife and I visited. Soon, without looking up, he called out "How do you spell 'real'?" Mrs. Russell immediately answered, "Oh, Charles, R-E-A-L-, of course."





**CHARLES M. RUSSELL ROOM**

In 1880, Col. Simpson's rangy longhorns from the Pecos River moved north to the rich grasses of the Little Missouri. In this vast area of Eastern Montana and Dakota Territories there soon came other big Texas trail outfits, the OX and 777. West, on the Montana badland were the Mill Iron and Pierre Wibaux's spreads. Marquis de Mores was at Medora. North were the more moderately sized Wadsworth, Prescott, Lang, Dantz, Huidekoper and Eaton outfits. Here too, ranged the Maltese Cross and Elkhorn-branded dogies of Theodore Roosevelt. The A. C. Huidekoper ranch, a big horse outfit, operated in the valley of the Little Missouri for some two decades after 1884. With the exception of a stint in the Spanish American War, Wallis Huidekoper virtually grew up on his cousin's ranch. In 1906 He established the famous American Forks Ranch of 35,000 acres, lying in Meagher, Sweetgrass and Wheatland Counties. In 1945, Col. Huidekoper sold his holdings to now Secretary of the Army Robert Stevens.

Wallis Huidekoper is a venerable old-time ranchman in the finest tradition; a revered member of the Montana Stockgrowers' Association. His interest in C. M. Russell has been more than that of an art patron. He knew C. M. R. well. He appreciated the accuracy, the honesty and the philosophical depth of his art. But more than that, once the Russell Room was established, he forfeited his own pleasures in the several original Russell's he had long owned, and turned them over to the Montana Historical Society for the permanent enjoyment of millions of Americans.

So the picture was nicely autographed, with the wording "This is the real thing painted the winter of 1886 at the O. H. ranch." And it was signed "C. H. Russell" with his buffalo head symbol. Kaufman's signature was afterwards obtained in Helena. I took him out of a solo game to get it, to put the sketch in its present historical form.

"Waiting for a Chinook" hung on the wall of my ranch home for thirty years. On November 17, 1942 I presented it to the Montana Stockgrowers Association, in order that our members, as well as the public, might see and enjoy it. This State Association has since placed it on permanent exhibit in the Russell room of the Historical Society of Montana.

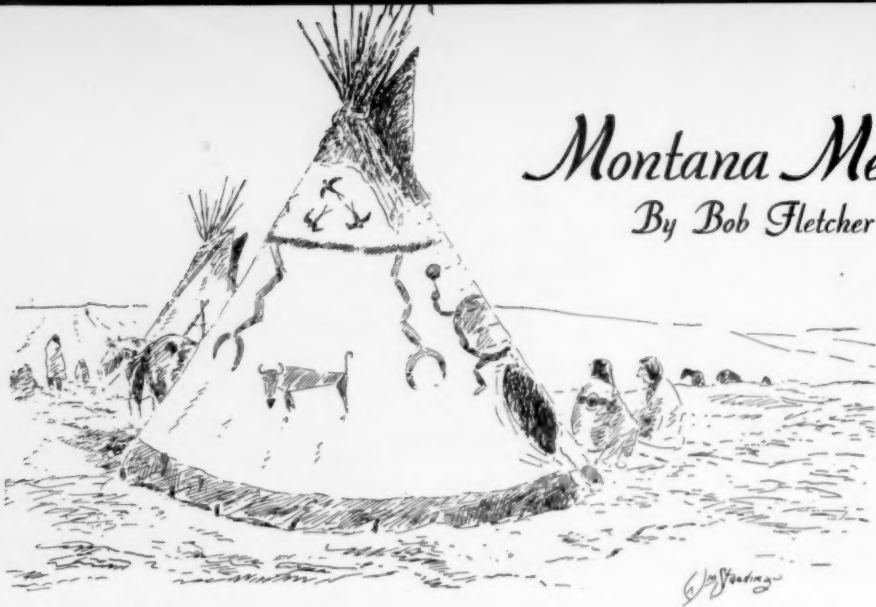
Jesse Phelps died in Helena about 1930. L. E. Kaufman passed away in the same city on March 12, 1933. Louis Stadler lived to the good old age of 92 years. He died Aug. 28, 1941. I always en-

joyed visiting with Kaufman, which I did frequently. One day he told me this story:

He had visited the ranch in the Judith Basin during the middle of the winter of 1886 when things were beginning to tighten up and get tough. This particular animal was a Texas brindle cow that used to come to the ranch and hang around the horse barn for protection and to gather such feed as might be thrown out. Phelps said to Kaufman. "Well, 'K', do you think you will be seeing that cow next spring?" To which Kaufman replied. "You bet I will and she will raise me a nice big bull calf." This was the freezing emaciated animal that Charlie Russell drew and from which he obtained his first recognition as an artist.

The poor old cow, was, indeed, waiting for a chinook.

[The End]



# Montana Medley

By Bob Fletcher

## The Treasure State's First Families

Montana's first families have their own theory about their origin, but it doesn't carry weight with anthropologists. The scientific gentlemen give small credence to the notion that any ancestral line can be traced back to a buffalo or beaver who emerged from a hole in the ground. There is a half legendary tale of the Old North Trail that came down from Alaska along the east toe of the Rockies. Whether the Asiatic tribes came, in surges, along a corridor left by a recession of the continental ice sheet; or whether they reached this country in pre- or post-glacial time is still a matter of dispute among the savants. In any case the trail must have led many of them into the United States by way of Montana's high plains. If they came before or during the ice age, the evidence has been obliterated where the ice sheet scoured the country. So a good place to search for clues is in Montana's area east of the mountains and just south of the glacier's farthest advance.

About the only modesty that mankind has ever displayed, is a reluctance to admit long residence on earth. We claim superior intelligence, yet hesitate to say that we originated as long ago as some of the dumb,—yes, even dumber animals. Montana fossil beds yield innumerable impressions of pre-historic fauna that

couldn't survive changing conditions but nary a record of man's arrival on the scene. Artifacts found in old campsites along the Yellowstone River near Glendive and Billings, tell part of the story of the predecessors of our Montana plains Indians. The Billings site is the oldest by far.

At a site on Bitter Creek, just south of Billings, two "caves" or recesses in the Eagle sandstone rimrock have been known to local residents for years. They used to picnic there on occasion and gaze with mild curiosity at the pictographs on the walls. Sometimes they added their own. It was no improvement. One of these recesses is known as Ghost Cave, the other as Inscription Cave. They are small but similar in shape to the sheltered crannies used by the cliff-dwellers of Colorado and Arizona.

In the spring of 1937, Mr. and Mrs. Jim Browne, now of the east shore of Flathead Lake, and Herb Barringer, amateur archaeologist, visited the caves. They found that a recent cloudburst had poured water over the rim at a point where it cut a cross section several feet deep through the debris covering the floor of Inscription Cave. It didn't take more than a superficial examination by these experienced people to discover

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

several hearth-levels, indicating intermittent human occupancy. To their everlasting credit, they unselfishly reported the find in the hopes that the site could be protected from exploitation and examined in a systematic and scientific manner by competent authorities. It looked as though this would be accomplished when a W.P.A. project was authorized and initial work started under the supervision of Mel Sayre of the Montana School of Mines faculty. It was aided and abetted by the State Highway Commission, which had acquired ownership of the ground following the discovery.

Literally thousands of artifacts and bones were found, including human skeletons. It was determined that there are four distinct cultural-levels and multiple hearth-levels in Inscription Cave, some of them separated by as much as five feet of compacted silt. This suggests the lapse of much time between the periods of occupancy. Skeletal remains of nine humans were identified. The framework of one old timer was found where he evidently had been reposing on a bed of vines and leaves when a slab of sandstone dropped from the ceiling and flattened him. Such a disaster could account for the tenants pulling out and leaving the apartment vacant until future generations had forgotten the tragedy and moved in.

Promoters of the project had in mind not only a scientific study and analysis of the site, but its preservation and development as an educational show place. Trenches were cut to expose cross sections of the cave floors, marked trails led visitors through the diggings in logical sequence, the people of Billings financed the construction of a small museum and the services of a caretaker. Then the war brought the project to a standstill; local interest waned and vandals destroyed the museum building.

The yield material was great in quantity and variety, far richer than any similar site in the western plains area.

Samples of bones, soil, pollen, and artifacts that had been shipped to various institutions around the country for examination were forgotten. Much of the remaining material was, somehow, trucked to Lewistown. Later it was returned to Billings; custodianship having been transferred from the School of Mines to the Normal School when Mel Sayre's interests took him elsewhere. The boxed collection became nothing but a storage nuisance until October 1940, when young, capable Bill Mulloy came out from the University of Chicago to take over the work of classification and analysis. A complete report has never been published, although copies of his W.P.A. reports are on file at the University of Montana. Through a subsequent move, engineered by Dr. Turney-High, then of the University faculty, the peripatetic relics arrived in Missoula where they now repose in charge of Professor Carling I. Malouf, Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

At this writing, Bill Mulloy's personal copy of his report is in Professor Malouf's possession, on loan. The Society of American Archaeology and other organizations are interested in sponsoring its publication, something that should be done by Montanans. An article in *American Antiquity*, written by Waldo E. Wedel of the United States National Museum, which reviews the Mulloy report declares that the discovery has thrown considerable light on the prehistoric story of the Northern Plains region. Prehistoric dwelling sites are a dime a dozen in the Southwest, but they are scarce in Montana. We should cherish this one.

Even a layman, who has seen the site and some of the material, can deduce that the cave dwellers of Bitter Creek chose their spot with an eye to wood, water, food, and protection from enemies and elements. Like other primitives, they used stone tools and weapons, did their travelling on foot with wolf dogs for pack animals, were fond of personal

adornment, and thrived on a meat diet. A pack rat's nest yielded a bone necklace that must have been the pride of some village belle. The pictographs of the tribal artists give hint of what they considered important and amusing. One set in Inscription Cave is done in red pigment and is of comparatively recent origin. It is superimposed on much older pictures and characters done in black. Those people weren't so backward. They were front-paging war, sex, and violence with all the techniques of a modern illustrated tabloid long before Gutenberg went to press. It is estimated that Montana's first families started living there about 6,000 years ago.

Some public spirited Billings organization has a wonderful opportunity to redevelop the state as a tourist attraction and to stage an annual pageant that would get national publicity. The scenario would almost write itself. Some Montana individual or organization should finance the publication of the Mulloy report and if that can't be done, surely typed copies can be made and kept for reference in conjunction with displays of typical artifacts at both the State University Museum in Missoula and the State Historical Museum in Helena. It would be a key report and in conjunction with another book now being prepared by Professor Malouf, would form a base for all future work on prehistoric man in Montana.

All of which is a matter of indifference to the Indians of today. They are used to being misunderstood, having been so ever since Columbus misnamed them. It doesn't make much difference to casual Montana visitors, either. Their sketchy conception of wild west Indians is a blend of feathers, blankets, and beads. They want their Indians served *au naturel*; and Indians in the raw are getting scarce.

In Montana, some of America's most colorful tribes are living quietly on seven reservations. These areas have constantly

shrunk since they were first allotted and still there are covetous whites who begrudge the tribes even this last sanctuary. To the wistful, rheumy eyes of the old warriors, any reservation looks small and futile compared to their original hunting grounds. Each year more patriarchs leave for the Sand Hills to join their fathers.

But there are still a few seamed survivors of the frontier days who added considerable zest and uncertainty to life on the plains. The proud, defiant, old-timers carry on tribal customs and traditions as best they can. Their ceremonies and dances are colorful affairs, many of them steeped in deep religious significance. A generation or two ago the naive redskins cherished the idea that virgin prairie covered with range grass and buffalo herds was a very pleasing sight. With childlike simplicity they asserted that the country belonged to them. When disputed, they considered it logical to employ pointed arguments in support of their contention. It took much persuasion on the part of Uncle Sam, assisted by Messrs. Colt and Winchester, to get these stubborn nomads settled in overalls on reservations. No white man has ever lived who could truthfully say that he fully understood Indians. None ever will. Archaeologists and anthropologists can pour over their artifacts, classify linguistic stocks, and correlate legends until the cows come home, but they can never quite fathom the mysticism and philosophy of the race.

There used to be corn-planters in the east and south, root-diggers on the desert, fish-eaters on the coast, but Montana Indians thrived on a meat diet. They had to be cunning and agile to catch their meals. It produced active, courageous, and intelligent tribes. To understand the great tragedy that finally overtook these independent lords of the plains you must know what buffalo meant to them. The countless brown herds were board-and-room-on-the-hoof.



Tanned hides made shirts, skirts, and leggings; robes served as bedding and tepee covers; rawhide furnished thongs, moccasin soles, war shields, and luggage; sinew was used for thread and bow strings; horns and bones were fashioned into tools and utensils; teeth were strung for bracelets and necklaces; skulls were used in religious ceremonials and even buffalo chips were fully utilized as prairie fuel!

Surplus meat was preserved by "jerk-ing" or sun-drying. The thin strips, hung on racks, became hard as flint. Pulverized and mixed with berries, then packed in rawhide containers and covered with marrow grease, it was "pemmican," a preserved food that kept indefinitely. One pound was worth ten of fresh meat in food value. Not a thing was wasted. The culture, religion, the very existence of the Indians was built about the buffalo. When the bison vanished, disaster overtook them.

Each Indian nation claimed hereditary hunting grounds. Boundary lines were vague and led to arguments over range rights. Perforating the neighbors with barbed missiles sometimes cured trespassing individuals permanently, but it annoyed their kinfolks. One such incident would lead to retaliation until all hands were making war medicine, a savage idiosyncrasy reminiscent of the civilized Hatfields and McCoys. It shoved up the mortality rate but it broke the monotony and gave the young braves a chance to count coup and merit eagle feathers.

There was always excitement, sport, and danger in killing buffalo. A big bull may look dumb and ponderous but he has a sultry temper smouldering close to surface. When aroused he is a spry and unreliable personality to trifle with. Before Indians acquired horses, they had to figure out cute and cautious ways to down the hump-shouldered hulks. You can read the sign and see how it was done in dozens of sites in Montana; or, better

yet, you can see the dramatic action frozen in diorama at the State Historical Museum at Helena.

Let us say that the food supply is running low with the Beaver Clan of the Pikunis. The pemmican needs replenishing as well as camp and personal equipment. A kill has to be made. The village medicine man starts the customary ceremonial to assure success of the hunt. It involves earnest singing and dancing as accompaniment to a time honored ritual. When the omens are propitious, the camp moves in the direction of a buffalo kill, which may be several sleeps away. The ideal site is a fairly level, grassy bench or mesa that breaks off at a rock rim with a vertical drop of fifteen feet, or more to the rock debris at the base of the cliff. On the bench, former hunters have built two converging rows of small rock piles spaced about fifty feet apart. The lines form a funnel terminating on the brink of the rim. They are station markers for hunters.

When the band arrives they may have to wait a few days for favorable conditions. It may take that long to maneuver a herd into position on the terrace without making them restless and suspicious. When things are to their liking, the hunters squirm through the grass until there is a prone Indian behind each rock pile. Then a weird looking beast starts across the bench between the grazing herd and the rim. This make-believe animal is one of the braves disguised with a wolf or buffalo robe. As the herd is up-wind it doesn't get the scent of the acrobatic apparition that is performing fantastic didoes to attract their attention. Curiosity overwhelms those nearest to the decoy. The near-sighted critters start edging closer to the interloper. When they arch their tails and start pawing dust they are about ready to go into action. By this time the rest of the herd has caught the fever and is getting nervous. The decoy moves off just enough to tantalize them and mass psychology

does the rest. The herd bunches, breaks into a thunderous gallop and the stam-pede is on.

As the Indian out in front sheds his robe and takes to his heels, his companions behind the rocks come to life on the swing and point of the herd, waving hides and offering vocal encouragement as the mass surges down the funnel. The herd's curiosity has changed to terror. No stopping the panic now. The leaders reach the rim and the pounding critters behind, blinded by dust and fear, push them over and follow. They land on the rocky slope below and pile up in a groaning, dazed welter of dirt, blood, and broken bones. Braves, old men, squaws, and youngsters have been eagerly waiting. When the brown Niagara boils over the ledge, it is their time to howl and they turn it on with all the forte stops wide open. Arrows, lances, and stone hammers are working on the cripples. It is a whooping, noisy bedlam of slaughter, dirt, and stench. That night the camp celebrates with full bellies. Later, horses and then white men, changed things.

Today, most of the scene is still intact. The rim and bench are just as they were. The Teepee rings or circles of stones that weighted down the edges of the lodges where the camp was pitched; the little rock cairns on the bench above; the silt-covered bones piled three to eight feet deep at the foot of the hill, are still there. Collectors dig into the debris stained with the blood of the vanishing herds. They run the excavated material through a shaking screen. It yields choice specimens of flint and obsidian arrow points, stone knives, fleshers, lance heads and war clubs. Mute mementoes of the colorful past from our first families.

[THE END]



## GOURMET

A member of the Lo family called at one of our hotels last week and made a contract with the landlord by which he was to get a dinner for the sum of fifty cents. The noble red man loosened his belt, and sat down with the air of a gladiator, determined to do his duty. He wrestled with that dinner in a rapid, strong and effective manner. At the end of a half hour, the alarmed boniface offered him his fifty cents back to quit. "No; me h-ea-p h-ung-ry." It was an exciting scene. The cooks and waiters aroused themselves and worked as though ministering to an old-fashioned barbecue or a modern grange feast. The other party to the mam-mouth contract looked as though he contemplated taking advantage of the bankrupt law. At the end of two hours, the landlord offered the son of the forest a dollar to relinquish his contract. Thinking, perhaps, he could make a similar contract at the other hotel, finish his dinner and have fifty cents left, the redskin took the money and started out, with his hands on his stomach, saying: "Ugh! me heap full, heap good muck—a—muck."

—Rocky Mountain Husbandman,  
March 2, 1876

## NO DRUG ON THE MARKET

"An excellent opening for business is afforded in Butte to any competent and energetic man who will put in a stock of drugs and chemicals. At present our supplies are drawn from Deer Lodge and Helena, and it is not an uncommon occurrence for our physicians to be obliged to send to Deer Lodge to procure remedies or have prescriptions made up that should be administered at once. In case of serious illness the result of such a condition of affairs may prove disastrous. A good drug store in Butte will pay. Who will avail himself of the opportunity?" (Butte Miner, Aug. 29, 1876.)

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

By Don Douma

The History of Oil in Montana

## SECOND *Bonanza*



### Part IV. *The Williston Basin*

The term "Williston Basin," now known among oil men the world over, was first used by Dr. W. T. Thom, Jr, of the Department of geology of Princeton University, in a paper presented before the Geological Society of America on December 28, 1923.<sup>1</sup> During the preceding decades Dr. Thom had taken an active part in geological studies made of Eastern Montana and the Dakotas and had worked with various field parties of the U. S. Geological Survey. As a result of these studies, Dr. Thom wrote various reports in which he called attention to the factors indicating presence of crude oil in this part of the country. One of these reports, dated May 6, 1921, is titled: "Possible Oil in Northeastern Montana."<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult to outline the exact boundaries of the area known as the Williston Basin. Generally it is considered to include southern Alberta, the western portions of the Dakotas and the easternmost 14 counties of Montana, the latter covering an area about 18 to 20 million acres.<sup>3</sup> The following quotation taken from Dr. McLaughlin's article (footnote 3) seems significant in determining Montana's potential share in Williston Basin's crude oil reserves:

*In practice those who are actively engaged in exploration and develop-*

*ment are not concerned with possible western limits of the Basin in Montana and have already extended their activities well into the western half of the state. It may some day be possible to define the western edge of the Williston Basin as a structural feature, but this will certainly not be the western limit of oil production in Montana. Most of the eastern 43-44 million acres of the state will eventually become subject to intensive investigation. This is essentially that part of the state lying east of a north-south line drawn through Lewistown, Montana.*

Early studies and drilling activity in the Montana portion of the Williston Basin were primarily concentrated on the Cedar Creek anticline, located approximately between the towns of Baker and Glendive. In previous installments, attention was called to the discovery of natural gas in this area as early as 1914, which was the first of a considerable number of gas wells drilled on the Cedar Creek anticline.

The presence of this natural gas and of geological structures favorable to the presence of crude oil, tempted oil operators until 1936, when Montana-Dakota Utilities Company<sup>4</sup> made the first deep test ever drilled on the Cedar Creek anticline. The well showed an initial pro-

This is the fourth and final installment—necessarily done very sketchily—of the oil history of Montana. The first mention of oil comes from the account of an emigrant wagon train, at a Bozeman Trail crossing of the Big Horn River in 1864, where a thin coating of crude scum was used to grease the wagon wheels. Sixteen years later, Granville Stuart seeking a new cattle range north of the Musselshell River, wrote in his journal, "... there are petroleum indications all through here and some day Montana will produce oil." Yet it was not until 1901 that the first well was drilled, in the Kintla Lake area of Flathead County, west of the Continental Divide; and a year later, south of Dillon—both regions which today still defy even the wildest wildcat's dreams, whereas much of the rest of the vast reaches of the Treasure State have either proven themselves or hold high hopes of proving "Second Bonanzas." Actually the true oil development of Montana is just starting. The Williston Basin is the dramatic new find which projects fabulous hopes for the future. In this final installment, therefore, attention is given to "The Basin."

duction of 250 barrels per day of low-sulfur oil; but after much testing the well had to be abandoned due to a large percentage of penetrating water.<sup>5</sup> The Montana-Dakota Utilities Company drilled two more wells after the failure of its No. 1 wildcat, but when these showed similar discouraging results no further oil drilling took place on the anticline until 1941.

Despite the fact that the Montana-Dakota Utilities wells showed unsatisfactory results, they were a significant step in the discovery of the Williston Basin. They proved the presence of crude oil below the Cedar Creek formation, and provided valuable technical data for future drilling ventures in eastern Montana.

In May 1941, Carter Oil Company, with Montana-Dakota Utilities Company as an interested party, drilled a deep test one and one-half miles to the southwest of the Montana-Dakota Utilities well No. 1. This was drilled to a total depth of 9678 feet with shows of oil found at various depths. After extensive testing, however, the well was plugged and abandoned at the end of 1942 as it failed to show production in commercial quantities.<sup>6</sup>

In the meantime the United States entry in World War II brought an unequalled demand for the strategic mineral. Oil companies turned away from prospecting in areas where production costs were high and the possibility of developing commercial production uncertain, concentrating their efforts, men and material on formations proven to be productive or more promising for immediate development. As a result the Williston Basin, with its deep wells and discouraging production record, was left dormant during the war years. Even after hostilities ceased it was almost four years before another wildcat was drilled in the Montana portion of the Basin. After extensive geophysical work along the Cedar Creek anticline, the Husky Oil Company drilled

a wildcat northwest of the initial Montana-Dakota discovery well.<sup>7</sup> The Husky No. 1 Northern Pacific, drilled to a total depth of 6834 feet, was brought in May 1949. This wildcat, too, failed to bring commercial production. It was shut in and the Husky Oil Company withdrew from its interest in the Cedar Creek units.<sup>8</sup>

Despite these discouraging results, Williston Basin remained a promising area. In addition to geological structures and conditions indicating the presence of crude oil in rather deep formations extending over thousands of square miles, the physical presence of oil in the Cedar Creek anticline had been proven by the 1936, 1941 and 1949 wildcats. One well, showing production in paying quantities, would be sufficient encouragement for continued wildcatting operations. Accordingly, during 1949 and 1950 a few large companies<sup>9</sup> carried on geologic and seismic work in eastern Montana, but no additional deep tests were made until the following year. April 1951 brought a long-desired commercial producer when Amerada Oil Company discovered its No. 1 Iverson on the northern part of Nesson anticline, Williams County, North Dakota.<sup>10</sup> The well, which reached a total depth of 11,955 feet, flowed 260 barrels daily from the Devonian structure.<sup>11</sup>

*Petroleum Information*: "An Introduction to the Williston Basin," p. 4. The author is indebted to the vast research files of this organization for much assistance in this final chapter.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup>K. P. McLaughlin: "Oil Development in Eastern Montana," *Montana Business*, Missoula, Montana, Dec. 1952.

<sup>7</sup>The Montana-Dakota Utilities Company drilled and operated several gas wells on the Cedar Creek anticline.

<sup>8</sup>*Petroleum Information, op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>12</sup>These companies were: Shell Oil Company, The Texas Co., Murphy Corporation and Carter Oil Co.-Phillips Petrol.

<sup>13</sup>*Petroleum Information: Resume of Rocky Mountain Oil and Gas Operations for 1951*, p. 71.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 71.



The Amerada well can be considered to be the real discovery well of the United State's portion of the Williston Basin, as it was the first wildcat to show production in commercial quantities. Its discovery was followed by an intensive leasing and drilling campaign which continues, unabated, in 1954.

The Montana portion of the Basin received impetus from the North Dakota discovery. In July 1951, Shell Oil Company completed a commercial producer near Richey in Dawson County with an announced potential of 1,656 barrels of 38 gravity crude per day.<sup>12</sup> A real scramble for leases immediately started in eastern Montana. Shell Oil Company's No. 1 Northern Pacific, located more than 150 miles southwest of the Amerada discovery well, indicated for the first time the vast expanse of Williston Basin. New leasing activity in Montana soon extended as far west as Fergus County and south as far as the Wyoming line.<sup>13</sup> Towards the end of 1951, it was estimated that about 60 million acres were under lease in the Williston Basin.<sup>14</sup>

While Shell Oil followed up its discovery commercial producer with a rapid exploratory program in the general Richey area, the Murphy Corporation of El Dorado, Arkansas, drilled a wildcat 42 miles to the northeast, in the vicinity of Poplar, on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. When the Murphy wildcat showed a daily flow of 400 barrels of 40.6 gravity oil,<sup>15</sup> a new oil field had been discovered in the Williston Basin. Soon known as the East Poplar field, it has experienced the most rapid exploration and development of any area within the Williston Basin of Montana.

Subsequent discoveries during 1952 made East Poplar field the largest oil producing area of eastern Montana.<sup>16</sup> Its importance for future crude oil production is expressed in the following quotation:<sup>17</sup>

*Certainly the East Poplar area appears to be one of the most important from a reserve standpoint of any yet*

*discovered in the Montana portion of this basin, and additional drilling may prove the field to be one of the largest in the region.*

Elsewhere in Montana's Williston Basin, the Texas Company drilled a wildcat during the latter part of 1951. Following extensive geophysical work the company staked its wildcat on the Cedar Creek anticline a few miles southwest of Glendive. The Texas Co. No. 1 Northern Pacific, completed early in 1952, showed initial production of 254 barrels daily.<sup>18</sup> This discovery and the diversified lease ownership in this part of the Basin started immediate drilling in the Glendive area. In addition to The Texas Company, which drilled a series of wildcats northwest and southwest of its discovery well during 1952, several other companies started drilling along this part of the Cedar Creek anticline.<sup>19</sup> Results did not meet expectations, although most of these wildcats reported shows of oil.

The early part of 1952 brought the discovery of another commercial well showing an initial production of 467 barrels of 33 gravity crude per day; drilled by Shell Oil on the Cedar Creek anticline in western Wibaux County in the area known as the Pine Unit.<sup>20</sup> This well, located some 21 miles southeast of the Texas Company's discovery near Glendive, produced oil from the same horizon.<sup>21</sup> Shell, later in the year, com-

<sup>12</sup>Petroleum Information: "An Introduction to the Williston Basin," p. 49—total depth of the Shell Oil Co. No. 1 N. P. was 10,518 feet.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>14</sup>Petroleum Information: *Resume* 1951, p. 73.

<sup>15</sup>Petroleum Information: *Resume* for 1952, p. 132—The Murphy No. 1 was drilled to a total depth of 9,163 feet.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 115.

<sup>17</sup>Petroleum Information: *Introduction*, p. 50.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 49.

<sup>19</sup>These companies were: Shell Oil Company, Ajax Oil Company (Billings) and Richfield Oil Company (California).

<sup>20</sup>Petroleum Information: *Introduction*, p. 50—total depth of the Shell Oil Pine Unit No. 1 was 9,746 feet.

<sup>21</sup>Ray Mondal: "Deep Wells Find Payoff in Two Different Horizons," *Great Falls Tribune*, Great Falls, Montana, Dec. 29, 1951.

pleted another wildcat in this area showing an initial flow of 431 barrels per day,<sup>22</sup> but development of Pine Unit field did not acquire the rapid tempo displayed by other new fields in eastern Montana.

New interest was soon created with discovery of oil in a Shell Co., wildcat on the Little Beaver portion of the Cedar Creek anticline in September, 1952. Drilled on a location five miles northwest of Montana-Dakota Utilities 1936 wildcat, it showed potential production of 293 barrels of crude per day.<sup>23</sup> As this discovery was within 15 miles of both the North and South Dakota borders, it stimulated interest among oil companies for prospecting in the adjoining states as well.

In general, both 1951 and 1952 were important years in Montana's oil history as they witnessed the discovery and initial development of a major field that is expected to develop into one of the truly great oil producing areas of the world. In Montana's portion of the Williston Basin, these years brought discovery of six different fields, spread over a distance of more than 150 miles, indicating the tremendous area and potential of our eastern region's oil reserves.

1953 was characterized by further exploration and development of those fields discovered during the two preceding years. Shell Oil continued drilling operations in the extreme southeastern part of the state. They brought in a new well on Cedar Creek anticline in an area known as Cabin Creek in Fallon County. This discovery was made at a location about 15 miles southeast of the Pine Unit and 35 miles northeast of the Little Beaver fields. The well showed a daily flow of 244 barrels of 33 gravity oil per day through choke, but had a tremendous calculated potential of 4,235 barrels daily!<sup>24</sup> Because of this vast potential Shell's Cabin Creek discovery received much publicity as the largest producer in Williston Basin.

Another significant discovery during 1953, was a joint wildcat drilled by Sun Oil and Phillips Petroleum, a few miles north of Sidney, in Richland County. This No. 1 Dynneson, was drilled to a total depth of 12,671 feet, making it the deepest ever drilled in the state.<sup>25</sup> Sun-Phillips showed an initial flow of 745 barrels per day, through choke.<sup>26</sup> The significance of this well in oil circles, is due to its location east of the Cedar Creek anticline, an area not located on a known structure. The No. 1 Dynneson was the result of intensive geophysical studies and was the first discovery made in Montana on a location based entirely on scientific studies.<sup>27</sup> Therefore the well was considered to be a true "seismic success."

A great deal of expanded activity also developed in the East Poplar field during 1953. 20 new producing wells were completed here, bringing the total in this field to 35 at the end of the year.<sup>28</sup> The new wells drilled and brought in during 1953 extended the producing area of East Poplar field, north and south, to an overall length of eight miles. This consisted of approximately 6,500 acres proven to be productive. the recoverable reserves present in the East Poplar oil field are now estimated to be in excess of 28,400,000 barrels.<sup>29</sup>

The major problem facing oil producers in the Williston Basin today is that of marketing the crude. Present production figures do not reflect either the real capacity or potential of the Basin. Its output is determined by market demand. Demand is determined by the price at which a product can be offered in our economic system. Price, in turn, is determined by total cost of production, of which cost of drilling and transporting the crude are important components. High drilling and transportation cost increases the price at which the Williston Basin crude can be offered; and the higher the price at which crude is offered, the smaller the demand. Ultimately this may price itself out of the market.

Oil producers in the Williston Basin, at present, are handicapped by both the highest drilling and transportation costs in the country. Drilling costs are due to depth; as producing wells in the Williston Basin are unusually deep compared to oil fields elsewhere in the United States. This is aggravated because cost of drilling increases more than proportionately with the depth of a well. One of 10,000 feet costs, at present, about three times as much as one of 7,000 feet; with drilling costs increased from approximately \$10 a foot at the 7,000 feet level to \$100 a foot at the 10,000 feet level.<sup>30</sup> While depth increases only 43 per cent, drilling costs increase some 900 per cent! This explains why production, in paying quantities, was not obtained in the Williston Basin until a well was brought in that showed adequate daily production.

Williston Basin oil producers, also are confronted with an unusually high cost of transportation because no large centers of population are located nearby and no large refineries are yet located in its vicinity. Crude, consequently, has to be transported large distances to market. Such transportation is possible only by truck or railroad tank car, at the present, both of which are considerably more expensive than pipeline. This can be seen from the following figures:

Carrier	Cost per Ton-Mile
Railroad	\$0.01695
Truck	.06125
Pipeline (crude)	.00344
Pipeline (gasoline)	.00445

Full development of the new eastern Montana oil fields hinges to a large extent upon the availability of pipelines which will enable Williston Basin producers to offer crude at a competitive

price. Construction of pipelines is thus of paramount importance to the development of Montana's oil industry, and indirectly, to the general economy of the state.

Present economic disadvantage of Montana's oil producers and refiners will disappear, to a large extent, with completion of pipelines either planned or under construction. Construction is underway now on a \$20,500,000 pipeline from Billings to Spokane by the Continental Pipe Line Company, subsidiary of Continental Oil, which will own 40 per cent of the line. Partners in the project are Interstate Oil Pipe Line Company, a subsidiary of Carter Oil Company, which holds 40 per cent. Union Oil Company has 14 per cent and H. Earl Clack, of Havre, the remaining 6 per cent. The project is scheduled for completion by September 1, 1954.<sup>31</sup> Last month the pipeline was reported to be near the half-way mark.

A second pipeline, constructed by the Oil Basin Pipe Line Co., of Chicago, between Billings and Glendive, will carry products of the Carter Oil Company of Billings, and the Farmers Union Central Exchange of Laurel, refineries. The cost of this pipeline is estimated at \$5,350,000. It is apparent that the completion of these two pipelines, alone, will form a significant landmark on the road towards future development of Montana's oil industry.

[The End]

<sup>30</sup>Petroleum Information: *Resume for 1952*, p.131.

<sup>31</sup>Petroleum Information: *Introduction*, p. 51.

<sup>32</sup>Petroleum Information: *Resume for 1953*, p. 65.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, p. B-29.

<sup>35</sup>Petroleum Information: *Resume for VTEC*, p. 65.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>38</sup>E. W. Zimmerman, *World Resources and Industries*, Rev. Ed. 1951, p. 527.

<sup>39</sup>*The Billings Gazette*, May 14, 1954.





## Montana Miscellany

### JOURNEY JOTTINGS

The road from Helena to Salt Lake City is five hundred and fifty miles long, according to Wells, Fargo & Co.'s schedule, and one inch thick according to corroborative evidence of lungs and linen; the former a palpable fact, the latter an impalpable powder; the one speedily overcome by a few days and nights travel, the other partially by the ameliorating effects of time, and a generous application of soap and water.

One scarcely realizes the elaborate machinery by which the mails, males, females and treasure—all of which may be generalized as the dust of the earth—are transported over these mountains, until they have made the trip, found "home stations" and eating stations every few hours, witnessed the employees ready every ten miles along the route, with sleek fresh teams, in all the glory of good grooming and shining harness, and taken occasion to definitely obtain facts and figures by inspection of the books. From these we ascertain that on the Northern Division between Salt Lake and the Mountain terminus, of which Mr. Wm. H. Taylor is Superintendent, there are three sub-Divisions, respectively under the immediate control of Messrs. Pollinger, Robbins and Burnett. There are sixty-three stations, one hundred and seventy-eight American horses. Ten Concord coaches are used each round trip, beside the number

held in reserve for emergencies, and every team is hooked onto the coaches with harness as complete and clean as Bonner's boy would bring out Flora Temple and Lantern in for a turn in Central Park.

The time north is three and a half days; south a few hours longer to make connections, and although delay is always anonying, the lay-over at Snake River and Bear River stations enables one to take a dip in the waters and refresh himself for the journey. We found at Boulder, Beaver Head Rock, Pleasant Valley, Snake River, Ruddy's, and Bear River excellent fare and good attention, and have but one suggestion to make: two dollars for a meal, which is charged at some places, is too high. Travelers are not responsible for the untimely hour of arrival at stations or for the lightness of travel. More than this, the price is no criterion for the quality of food. If one station keeper can set a tip top, tempting, palatable and digestable dinner for \$1.25 or \$1.50, another should not charge \$2.00 for an abortion of a breakfast, if he expects salvation in the next world or exemption from Quixotic ex-coriation in this. Having thus mentioned the mechanism of the trip, and adding to the general commendation bestowed upon the efficient conduct of the road, the incidents of the journey offer themselves to those jottings.

—*Montana Post*, Aug. 28, 1868.

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY



## COMMUTER'S QUANDARY

Helena, 1868.

"Coming from the races" has, before now, been a favorite theme for illustration with our pictorial press, but could any of the special artists been "on the spot," say anywhere between Helena and Ten Mile, late yesterday afternoon, we think they could have produced a sketch of "Coming from the Fair," which would have surpassed in grotesque points, if not in beauty, the older and favorite subject.

In going to the fair, tastes differed. Some wished to go early in the morning, and others still later in the day; but all wished to come home at the same time, namely, at the conclusion of the last race. The consequence was that the conveyances which took them to the grounds were entirely unable to return them at the desired hour, and every expedient was resorted to for the purpose of getting away from the field of action.

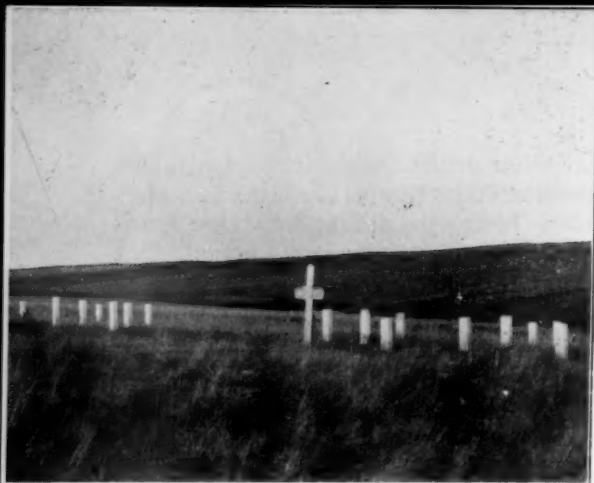
A cloud of dust hung over the entire road for a distance of three miles, and the sun was totally obscured by its density. Job wagons, farm wagons and lumber wagons were crowded to their utmost capacity with returning fair viewers. Concord coaches and stages, with legs hanging out of every opening, and with incongruous piles of humanity on top, were rushing over the ground at a break neck speed; more pretentious single and double teams were whirling their occupants over the road as if the big Tennessee snake was after them; innumerable horses carried a double load of mortal flesh, and the one hack of the city, with its nine passengers to a trip, was making the quickest time on record.

We suppose at least one-fourth of the entire assemblage at the fair grounds expected to come home in the one hack, but they failed to do so. Ourselves were among the unfortunates, and had it not been for Hugh Kirkendall, Esq., the fast line freighter of the mountains, and his

splendid double mule team, we might even at this writing (10 o'clock at night) have been completing what we commenced—a journey home on foot. But the long-eared conveyancers were generously at our disposal, and we were thus happily rescued from the fate which awaited many others, and put in a position to appreciate the ridiculous character of the panorama on exhibition which we could not, otherwise, have enjoyed. A kind of a Bull Run stampede seemed to be in progress, and everyone rushed pell-mell for the city, regardless of dust, the crowded condition of the thoroughfare and everything else save getting along. They were all dirty, hungry and tired. Saponaceous water, "grub piles" and beds awaited them in town. Hence the stampede. Arrived in the city, the sluicing of surface dirt, panning out the pay streaks (streaks of fat and lean), and the striking of bed rock were in order.

—*Montana Post*, Oct. 16, 1868.





This is an old photograph of Custer battlefield graves, from the archives of the State Historical Library.

### A GRAVE WHICH GAVE UP ITS DEAD

Helena, M. T. June, 1882.

"It sounds like a great deal to say, but I once knew a man who died and was buried on the Overland trail to California and afterwards made his appearance in the placer mines at Prickley Pear City (now called Montana City) about eight miles from Helena on the Dillon road—and it wasn't his ghost either, but himself in the flesh." This was the reply which a well known resident of Helena made yesterday to a reporter who was applying the reminiscence extractor.

"That sounds well for a starter," said the reporter; "tell me more about it."

"Well," continued the other, "I want to tell you in the first place that the truth of what I'm going to tell you can be vouched for by several old-timers I could name, and among other I think Jerry Embry could tell you something about it."

Jerry Embry is very well known in Helena, and is living at present up Grizzly Gulch, about five miles from here.

"In the spring of '49," continued the citizen, "when the California gold excitement was at its height, in company with a large party, I crossed the plains. After getting well under way the cholera broke out among us and several died. Among other deaths was that of a man named W. H. Clark, of Henry County, Missouri. We buried him near the point where the old Santa Fe trail crossed the Arkansas river. We had no coffin, but

wrapped him in his blankets, and enclosing him in a covering of bark stripped from the Cottonwood trees, we planted him several feet deep in the sand and piled logs on his grave to keep the wolves from digging him up. The next morning we moved on.

"I remained in California until '65 and was then attracted to Montana by the gold excitement. In 1868, when in the diggings at what is now known as Montana City, I was startled at meeting Clark, whom, with my own eyes, I had seen buried on the Arkansas river nineteen years before. The recognition was mutual and on my expressing surprise he related to me that after our party had buried him and proceeded on to California, a party of Indians came along and seeing this new made grave, dug him up for the sake of his blankets and clothing. As he showed signs of life they applied restoratives and the result was that he was brought back to life and health. He lived among the Indians for years, and afterwards came to Montana. At the time I met him he was working for Jerry Embry. There is absolutely no doubt as to Clark's identity, and he is now living at Prescott, Arizona, I believe."

—*Helena Independent*, June 29, 1882.

### STYLE NOTE

The Montanian tells the following which is probably vouched for: "We heard a pretty good one on Major Pease, of the Crow tribe, yesterday. It seems for the purpose of having the Indian children around the Mission look as neat and tidy as possible on the occasion of the first visit of Rev. Mr. Brunot, the high chief of the peace men, that the Major went to Bozeman and bought a number of nice little red and white knit hoods, and gave each little Indian one of them, telling them at the time to put

them on before being brought into the presence of Mr. Brunot the next day. But imagine his consternation when the little Los made their appearance for inspection, stripped to the hide, with each a little red and white hood hanging down in front of them with the strings tied around their waists. It is pronounced to have been an elegant dress parade, and the gentleman from the city of brotherly love is said to have enjoyed it very much. But unfortunately the shock proved too much for the Major's nerves and he had to retire, to his closet—we suppose to pray, you know all Indians are religious men.

—*Helena Weekly Herald*,  
August 7, 1873.

### A TRIP TO BENTON

... At this place [Sun River] we were told in all earnestness of a cow being butchered at Ft. McLeod this fall, the stomach of which contained seven dollars in gold dust. The bovine remained overnight in the corral at the post and it is reasoned that she must have partaken of grass, roots and all, near the post, which contained the precious stuff.

No one has insinuated that the butcher choked the animal to death by inducing her to eat the dust. It is also stated that two other beeves were butchered at the same post last spring, that had \$4 to \$5 gold dust taken from the stomach of each. There is considerable excitement over the affair. Old prospectors are found in the neighborhood, in groups, around camp fires, talking in bated breath about placer diggings with shallow bed rock, paying from the grass roots down. And reference is continually made to the "Blue Streak of California." These parties are moving mysteriously about the country looking for a point where the granite and slate come together. The genuine West coast prospectors will have nothing to do with any but contact formations. These men are dressed for the

most part in greasy buckskins, each one has a bottle of blue mercurial ointment in his pack. There is a pack animal in every instance to two men. Each man rides a Cayuse pony.

The hair and beards of these nomads are untrimmed and unkempt. They are an uncanny set. Their voices are hoarse and broken; their eyes bloodshot, their faces shrivelled and weather beaten, and their fingers as long and black as those of a corpse. Each one has a buckskin purse, made from black-tail deer hide, killed in the fall, cut from a choice part of the skin, and none of these purses are capacitated to contain less than \$3,000 clean \$18 dust. Scarcely a one of these sacks but has made the trip at least once to the mint at San Francisco and still has bits of sealing wax on it showing that it has been through the hands of the expressman.

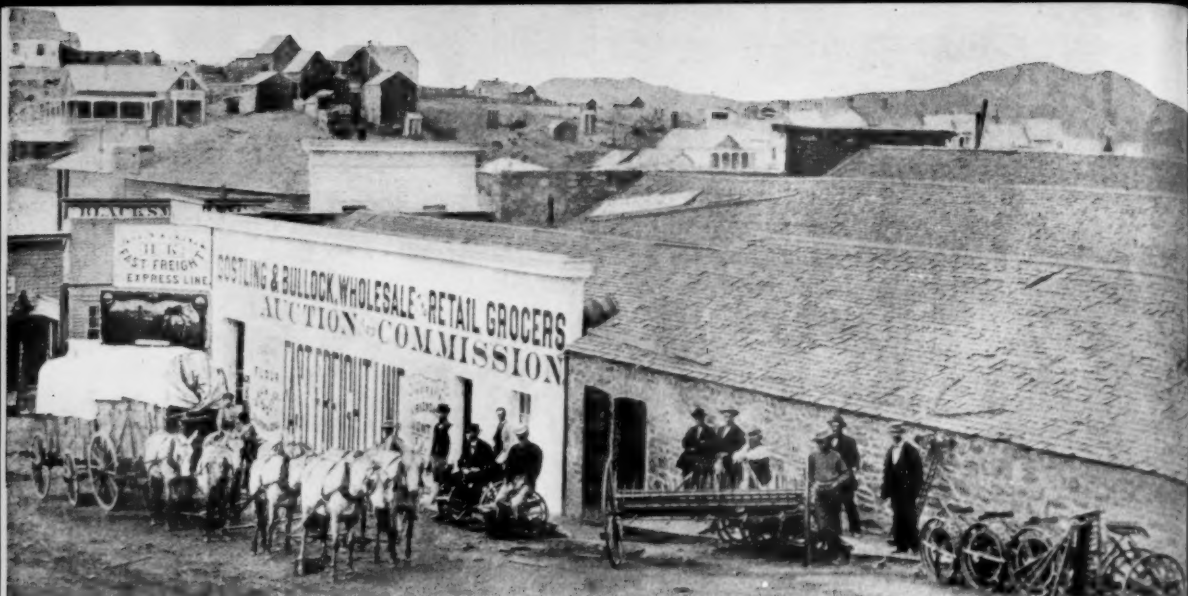
These wandering Ishmaelites may easily be distinguished from the "Cow Boy" of this region by one peculiarity not of the "Prospector" but of the "Cow Boy." They are never seen at Dearborn, or any similar settlement, with an arsenal of revolvers or Arkansas tooth picks in their belts, and 17 fingers of sheep-dip aboard, inspiring them to dance in antics that far discount anything done by the Africans in their snake dances among the cane breaks of Louisiana, and yelling that they "can whip their weight in wild cats and a corral full of mountain lions thrown in!" No, it is only the "Cow Boy" that possess the peculiarity of developing such idi-os-ny-cra-zies.

There are whispers that there will be a big stampede to the Ft. McLeod diggings in the spring. It seems reasonable to suppose that where cows can find pay at the grass roots, men might prudently venture deeper for hidden treasures.

—*Glendale Atlantis*, Nov. 24, 1880.

"We want to list your magazine in the American Peoples Encyclopedia."

DOROTHY ELLIOTT HOPKINS  
*Chicago, Ill.*



For many years after discovery of rich diggings in Last Chance Gulch, Helena was a key transportation terminal, midway north and south between important Fort Benton and Virginia City; and west from the Bozeman Trail to the Mullan Road. This old street scene shows the H-K Fast Freight Terminal, one of many in the Mining City.

### LONG JOURNEY

This letter was published originally in the *MISSOURI DEMOCRAT* in 1868. It was recently sent to the *GREAT FALLS TRIBUNE* by Dr. E. B. Trail, Missouri River steamboat historian, who noted that this "leaves no doubt that the little steamer TOM STEVENS went higher above the sea and a greater continuous water distance from it than any boat before it or since that time."

Fort Benton, M. T.,  
July 17, 1868

I take pleasure in sending you a little "item" of the trip of the first steamboat that ever went to the "great falls of the Missouri river," sixty miles above Fort Benton, as high as any boat will ever go again.

The little steamer Tom Stevens, John H. Burk, Captain, and Frank A Murray and T. C. Bigger, pilots, left Fort Benton at an early hour on the morning of the 14th inst., with a pleasure party, consisting of Capt. H. H. Symmes, Mr. Carroll (of the firm of Carroll & Steel), I. G. Baker, Capt. Sam De Bow (of the N.W.T. Co.), Mr. Roosevelt (of Wells, Fargo & Co's. Express), Lieut. Townsend, Maj. Wright and many others. We proceeded on our voyage unmolested by "wind or weather," the excursionists enjoying themselves by shooting at game. At dark we laid by at an island, where we all went ashore, and had a fine time christening it "Rosa's Island," in honor of Mr. Rosevelt, on board. We also left

some of Capt. Sam De Bow's posters. Here we had the misfortune to lose our cook, who jumped overboard and was drowned.

July 15th—Weather clear and pleasant. We left "Rosa's Island" at daylight and went up the river to "High Wood Creek," forty-five miles above Fort Benton, and gathered some good wood. T'was here the steamer Gallatin came in 1867. Here Captain H. H. Symmes, his pilot and engineer, left us and returned to Fort Benton in their yawl-boat. At 10 o'clock a. m., we left High Wood Creek and "went on our way rejoicing," the country through which we had to pass being the most beautiful I have ever seen. We arrived at the foot of the falls at half-past one p. m., as high up as any boat will ever go again. In fact, a boat cannot go any farther. This is twelve (12) miles from the "Great Falls" by water, and only five miles by land. This we called "Burk's Return," where we disembarked to see the "Great Falls" of "eighty-four feet." Then came the fun of climbing mountains and "prickly-pears," and I assure you there were a good many "gave out" before we reached our journey's end and went back to the boat. Those that reached the "falls" were Mr. Carroll, Mr. Frank A. Murray



one of our pilots), Wm. M. Thompson Jr., Maj. Wright, Lieut. Townsend, Reese Townsend our engineer), the watchman, carpenter and a few others. We got to the falls at five o'clock p. m. We went down at the foot of them and under them, and it was a most beautiful sight. The beauty and grandeur of the "Niagra Falls" is no comparison, as I've seen both places—and one of the finest places in the world for a "Summer resort," being a good fishing place, with no hostile Indians near you at all. At the "fall" the river is about five hundred yards wide, one hundred yards of which is a "perpendicular fall," the balance being a regular "roll," forming a basin just below the base, where the river is only one hundred and fifty yards wide. Both sides of the falls there are rock mountains from six to seven hundred feet high; one mile above there is a fall of forty feet, and at Bell creek, just below, there is one of about eighteen feet, and four miles below is one of six feet—all of which are mostly perpendicular. "Burk's Return" is just below, where there is a four-foot fall. We returned at dark, and had a good night's rest. At daylight we started for Fort Benton, stopping on our way down to get a load of wood. We arrived at Benton at seven o'clock p. m., and the citizens fired a salute in honor of the event—we being the first boat that ever went to the falls, and the well-known veteran, Captain John H. Burk, and pioneer pilots Frank A. Murray and Thos. C. Bigger—Frank A. Murray being the first and only pilot that went to the "Great Falls," where he carved his name in the 'rocks,' where it will remain for ages. Yours with respect,—A MAN ON BOARD.

---

"As a new Montanan, I am able to learn all about this wonderful Treasure State, thanks to your most enjoyable magazine. It is a great teacher!"

MRS. G. C. ATKINSON,

SUMMER, 1954

## TRAVELER'S TRAVAIL

I arrived here this evening at eight o'clock, *forty-eight hours from Helena!* The stage stock on the route from Kennedy's to Sun River is wholly insufficient to draw empty coaches, to say nothing about passengers, mail or express matters. Bullteams or freighters were called upon twice to take the coach out of mudholes and up hills. Passengers, the first night out, walked nearly the entire distance from Dearborn to Bird Tail Rock. Last night, in the darkness, mud and rain, passengers were called upon to walk through the country bordering the "Lakes," and, this morning we are in a plight to be imagined, but scarcely described . . . It is rumored here that Capt. Wall, in view of the deplorable manner in which this division of the Overland is conducted, is about to establish an opposition line, to be made up from his bull trains and to ply regularly between Helena and Benton. I advise the people of the up-country, who are in a hurry to reach the river, to wait the establishment of the "opposition," assured that they will be quickly accommodated, and get a comparatively quick trip, and no walking passage for their money.

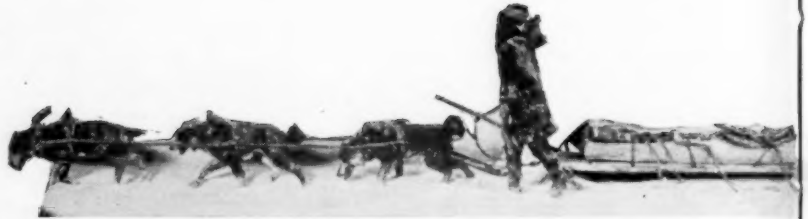
—*Helena Weekly Herald*,  
May 28, 1868.

---

## DRY SUNDAYS

*"The Sunday closing movement has been successfully inaugurated. The parties interested all kept their agreements to the letter, and the doors were closed promptly at 2 P. M., much to the satisfaction of the proprietors and employes, and without inconveniencing any of their customers. One enthusiastic advocate of the measure remarked that he sold five hundred dollars worth of goods before breakfast Monday morning and considered it a direct reward of merit."* (Butte Miner, Sept. 5, 1876.)

# Letters to the Editors



"It strikes me as strange that almost every single letter I have seen in your magazine has been lavish in praise and not a bit of criticism. Why is this?"

Jean Alice Thomas  
Reno, Nevada

Perhaps you haven't read this issue before it went to press, as we have. But despite the off-balance commendation, which we cannot control, we do earnestly solicit criticism.

\* \* \*

"The bilious green ink on your otherwise excellently designed cover, for Spring 1954, almost lost a newstand sales when I passed through your good State in May. But thanks to a forceful sales gal I was not deterred. The inside contents sparkle . . . journalistically, artistically . . . and best of all with readable, excitable history that fills a long-felt niche in my pseudo-scholarly library."

Edgar T. Varnum, III  
New York City

Amen. We too, are grateful for news and book store sales.

\* \* \*

LIFE, TIME, SATEVEPOST and FORTUNE, all

are monumental magazines, distressingly affluent, colossally colorful, meticulously small

In editorial content which molds the minds of millions.

That may be progress.

But for my reading pleasure small  
—in stature tall

I'll take your original treatment of real stuff  
In the neatest package that I know;  
Montana Magazine of History!

J. D. T.  
Spokane, Washington

\* \* \*

I saw the Paxson exhibit when it was at the museum last winter and it is beyond me how you could even start to compare him with other Montana artists. To start with "for a man to have lived in the early days and, painted as he saw it," could possibly have all Indians look alike—have all of the buffalo or for that matter all his animals on the oriental side (mainly sad-slanted woe-begone eyes) doesn't show very much originality.

If you should have a chance in the near future to again show works of Montana Artists why not try some of O. C. Seltzer's beautiful works. There, in my opinion, is a "Frontier Vermier." Best of luck to the magazine. I enjoy it very much, but, please keep Paxson out of my hair."

E. O. Jensen  
Ventura, California

Neither Mr. Toole or Mr. Kenneday consider themselves authority on art; nor do they propose to sit in judgment on technical matters in this difficult field. But this, sir, is a magazine of history, which believes that a picture may be worth several thousand words. Charles M. Russell captured more of the spirit of an important range event in "The Roundup" than has ever been put in words. Paxson, Bodmer, Catlin, Alfred Jacob Miller; Huffman, Barry, Barthelmess, Haynes and Jackson (photographically), and many others, have contributed vastly to the articulation and understanding of our priceless historical heritage. We hope, eventually, to discuss every frontier artist or photographer who ever visited this Territory.

\* \* \*

"Most of your emphasis, it seems to me, is in perpetuating the myth of the rugged frontier days when men were men, women were ravishing, and both died with their cow boots on. Now mind, you, you're accurate, but hasn't any history been made in Montana since 1880?"

This is a serious matter which we continually work against. First, people like to know more of the earlier, more robust frontier history. Secondly, one of our prime purposes is broad public distribution of history not previously published. (Hundreds of unpublished manuscripts still languish in the files of the State Historical Library.) And last, but not least we sincerely believe that history should be served up hot, appetizingly and attractively if it is to be fully digested and appreciated. We give no priority to old dates or new, only to the quality, merit and significance of the subject matter.

\* \* \*

Thank God for your delightful little magazine! I have read history for 50 years, hoping that someday somebody would take it out of the 'sacred cow' class of the academicians and make it live for future generations of Americans. My heartfelt congratulations.

Gerald Terry Dean  
San Francisco, California

\* \* \*

"I like your magazine and your building but isn't it about time you quit tooting your own horn? If a thing is good it will hold its own. You don't have to high pressure anybody. I'm sick of hearing your appeals for money over the radio. You are a state institution supported by all the taxpayers. But you keep asking for more, and accusing the people of disinterest. You aren't in a position to accuse us of anything . . . I'll continue to subscribe to the magazine because I like that part of it that tends to business. I just ignore the horn tooting and when I hear K. Ross Toole or Michael Kennedy on the radio, I just turn it off. I hope you never get on television.

Howard Nettles  
Kalispell

We are on Television programs scheduled for Butte, Billings and Great Falls, now, with Missoula in the offing. We try and reach the fullest radio audience whenever time, and the tolerance of the radio management permits. We hope to be heard and seen in Kalispell whenever such a program can be scheduled.

# BOOK REVIEWS



**KICK THE DEAD LION**, A Casebook of the Custer Battle, by Charles G. Du Bois. Reporter Printing Co., Billings, Mont., 1954, 48 pp., 2 maps, ill., \$1.

*Reviewed by Addison R. Bragg*

Most recent addition to the swollen bibliography on the Battle of the Little Big Horn is a contribution of a Montana student, a Billings radioman. It was written not so much to defend Custer, says Du Bois, as to attack Reno and Benteen. A remark like this coming from a Big Horn "student" is, to say the least, refreshing.

Those familiar with the Sacred Writings of Dustin and Brininstool have read the "impartial, dispassionate, unbiased

and accurate" accounts which—in both cases—start with the premise that Custer was a knave and Reno a white knight in shining armor—and go on from there.

Du Bois' title echoes Gen. Nelson A. Miles' remark on learning of the attacks made on the "boy general" after the Big Horn disaster: "It's easy to kick a dead lion."

Lion-kickers Dustin and Brininstool won't care too much for this treatise. They won't like an effective swat taken at Benteen who—on the witness stand during the court inquiry which followed the battle—interrupted his testimony with the damaging admission that "he thought Custer was already dead" when he received the famous "Come

## Buffalo Chips . . . Bits of Book Chat About Montana

● **GOOD MEDICINE**, indeed to thousands of Charles M. Russell art lovers the world over is the prescription for enjoyment prescribed by Doubleday in the reprinting of the great book of this title which came out in 1929, some three years after the death of The Cowboy Artist. Fortunately the old plates have been re-used, better paper and larger format is employed. It all emerges as a splendid tonic, for \$10, which could never be better spent. We understand that this is a limited printing; therefore our book shop has ordered heavily on this fine cure for almost anything that ails anyone.

● **THE QUIET WOMAN** is the stealthy title of a new novel just published by Funk & Wagnalls Co., N.Y. It comes from the pen of Mrs. Agnes Adams Fisher, a former Butte resident who now lives in Boston, where her husband presides over a Junior College. Although we wish success for the new novel, our hopes go to another one by Mrs. Fisher, yet unpublished, which deals with the area surrounding "the richest hill on earth," vallant Copper Camp.

● **THE CHILDREN'S HOUR**. Too often, we feel, youngsters are slighted in the sharing of our rich historical heritage. The lack of good Western books for adults is distressing enough—but when it comes to the kids, it's shocking. And so, we are happy to report that Garden City Books is doing a splendid job in the REAL BOOKS series, with almost two score titles to date. Attractively hard-covered, with good format they sell at only \$1.25. They deal with many subjects, but for our purpose we were intrigued with these worthy titles: **Buffalo Bill; Indians; Horses; Cowboys; The Wild West; and American Tall Tales**, all of which are vastly superior to radio and movie horse-operas, and not nearly so likely to delinquentize as the vast outpourings of the pulps and cheap pocket books. . . .

● **ANNUAL WRITERS' CONFERENCE** of Montana State University will be July 19-24 with its usual excellent program covering all types of writing including a T-V program workshop. Featured will be J. Frank Dobie and Walter

Van Tilburg Clark, noted for his books **The Ox Bow Incident** and **Track of the Cat** and for numerous good short stories. Clark is now a regular member of the MSU faculty. Dobie lives in Texas.

● **CROW INDIANS** once came to life under the competent brush of Joseph Henry Sharp, a portrait painter and teacher at the Cincinnati Art Institute, after 1902, when he came to Crow Agency to paint. 80 of his Indian portraits were purchased in one group by Mrs. Phoebe Hearst for the University of California. When Mr. Sharp died last year at the age of 93 he left a legacy which should not be overlooked in rare Montana art. (Collector's Note.)

● **RELIGIOUS WRITING** is the forte of Dr. Frederick I. Kuhns of Ricky Mountain College, who researches diligently at every opportunity at the State Historical Library. It is now paying off in the form of a series of articles titled "Home Missions and Education in the Old Northwest" appearing in the *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society*.

quick, bring packs" message and, for that reason, didn't bother to obey it. And they won't like the author saying Maj. Marcus A. Reno was court-martialed twice within four years following the battle and was dismissed from the service. But it's true.

It's time, argues Du Bois, that someone spoke up for the U. S. 7th Cavalry—and he does an apt job. "Kick" has its technical parts, however, where one not too familiar with the subject might get lost in a welter of mounts, dismounts, Weir Points, skedaddling Indians and civilian packers—but on the whole, Du Bois has written a readable, interesting piece. And he's proved himself a pretty canny author. His monograph came out

barely a month before the national reunion of the U. S. 7th Cavalry Assn., held in Billings.

Col. W. A. Graham is another authority at whom Du Bois takes an effective cut with references to the charge of drunkenness leveled at Reno. As long as Reno wasn't drunk during the battle, Graham argues, what difference does it make if he was "drunk as a boiled owl" the night following the battle. To which Du Bois replies, in effect: What would happen to a U. S. Army captain in Korea who, after holding out in a position surrounded by Chinese all day, proceeded to get drunk as soon as night fell?

A good question, Charles. And a good new piece of Custeriana!



This fine diorama in the museum of the Custer National Battlefield near Crow Agency, Montana, is probably more historically accurate than any graphic representation ever done. Of course, it does not have the dramatic impact of some artist's conceptions of the event.

### *Buffalo Chips . . . Bits of Book Chat About Montana*

● **J. FRANK DOBIE** needs no introduction to any complete Westerner. We can think of nothing more appropriate in lauding this valiant Texan, than to turn one of his well-turned phrases on himself: "Nothing is too trivial for art, but good art treats nothing in a trivial way. Nothing is too provincial for the regional writer, but he cannot be provincial-minded toward it. Being provincial-minded . . . will prevent him from being a representative or skillful interpreter." Anyone who has read *Coronado's Children*, *The Longhorns*, *The Mustangs* or his

other fine books knows how skillful an interpreter J. Frank Dobie is. As a non-provincial he wrote: "I feel very warmly towards the Historical Society of Montana . . . this narrative of a Montana wolf is my gesture of friendship." (See p. 10). MSU is indeed fortunate to have this Montana-minded citizen at its Writer's Conference this summer.

● **JOHNNY CAKE** is a delightful dish when well handled. Again Dale White (Mrs. Howard, or Marion Place, in Butte, where she

lives with her teen age son and daughter) has proven again that she is one of Montana's top contemporary authors with her excellent historical juvenile *The Johnny Cake Mine* (Viking Press, 222 pp., \$2.75). The Place family spent a lot of time exploring Montana's isolated and abandoned ghost camps. Several years ago she uncovered a rich find in old letters and journals of a long-gone silver mining firm, which provides much of the factual background for this entertaining 1870 story.



COW COUNTRY CAVALCADE, by Maurice Frink. The Old West Publishing Company, Denver, 1954. xvi, 243 pp. Forward illustrations, maps, appendix, notes on sources and index. \$4.50.

by Robert C. Athearn,  
University of Colorado

Although *Cow Country Cavalcade* is primarily the story of the Wyoming Stock Growers Association, the author fortunately viewed his subject through the long-range lense. The result is a study of the cattle industry in a broader sense, with Wyoming looming large in the foreground. References to Montana, and other neighbors of Wyoming, indicate the interstate nature of the cattle industry. So skillfully has the author lifted his subject out of a narrow setting, confined by state lines, and placed it in the larger framework, that many a prospective reader who might otherwise be frightened by the anticipation of a microscopic study, will gladly place this volume alongside his more general items of western Americana.

The Wyoming Stock Growers were particularly fortunate in finding a historian who could write. The easy, fluid style served up in well paced chapters, will draw the reader on and make him reluctant to lay the volume aside when he hears his own chuck-wagon triangle clanging out the warning "Come and get it or we'll throw it out." The engaging story, which describes the general history of cattle on the high plains briefly, and then sets the Association organized by Wyoming cattlemen into the well prepared setting, illustrates how gracefully statistics and economic matters can be blended into a palatable literary dish—if the right man handles the ladle. Maurice Frink is an old hand at the game. The reading of only a few pages of this new and exciting account will prove that fact to the reader.

As one who was commissioned by the Association to round up the material, the author has done well in his attempt

at objectivity. He has indulged in no sentimentality over the hardships of the stockmen and has given a forthright account of their battles with Indians, drought, disease and blizzards. The inclusion of the rather extensive resolutions adopted by the 1953 Association Convention, which talked in loud terms about governmental "interference" in the business, will illustrate something of the controversial nature of the subject. This is particularly striking in view of the fact that the preceding two chapters dealt with the extent of governmental disaster relief in connection with the winter of 1949 (Operation Haylift) and with grasshopper control, which measures were heartily welcomed by the stockmen. Regardless of one's point of view, on the other hand, this is the story of the cattlemen, and their feelings about their own industry are a part of the picture. Mr. Frink has done his level best to shoot straight with both his readers and the stock growers about whom he writes. In this, he is a good reporter.

To those interested in the West in general, the many excellent illustrations will be most welcome. The photographs and drawings make a perfect blend with the talented pen of the author, who paints a colorful and informative portrait of some exciting chapters in frontier history.

\* \* \*

ON THE OREGON TRAIL: ROBERT STUART'S JOURNAL OF DISCOVERY. Edited by Kenneth A. Spaulding. University of Oklahoma Press, 1953. pp. 1-192. \$3.75.

Reviewed by Paul C. Phillips,  
Montana State University

John Jacob Astor's, Astoria and the Pacific Fur Company have had many historians among the men who were employed on the great expedition to the Columbia. One of the most significant of them was Robert Stuart, a young Scot who embarked on the Tonquin sailing from New York in 1810 for the mouth

of the Columbia. Almost two years later, he was appointed to command an overland party with the first letters and reports sent to Astor in nearly two years. His return trip was over the Oregon Trail, the discovery of which is generally credited to this party. Stuart kept a day to day "Journal of a voyage across the Continent of North America from Astoria, The Pacific Fur Company's principal Establishment on the Columbia To the City of New York . . ." Some time afterwards he revised this journal for use by Washington Irving in writing *Astoria*. All these materials were edited by the late Philip A. Rollins and published in 1935 as the *Discovery of the Oregon Trail*.

The editor of this modernized version has combined the two Stuart accounts in an attractive and unified style. *On the Oregon Trail* preserves the flavor of the old narratives but is modernized enough to make smooth and attractive reading. The result is one of the most vivid and interesting of all stories of the far western frontier.

The editor has preserved, in this earliest account of a trip over the Oregon Trail, the flavor of the original. The story is a detailed description of the country unsurpassed by later writers. It reveals much of the habits and thoughts of men enduring hardships and dangers of the wilderness. The footnotes clearly locate the route followed and explain deviations from the later trail. The editor locates the route over the crest of the Rockies as some distance south of South Pass. This agrees with the careful studies of the route by J. Neilson Barry.

The editor has written an unusual type of introduction. It contains a brief sketch of Stuart's early life with a keen character analysis and discusses some elements of frontier society and of the fur business. Most carefully presented is the effect of the Stuart narrative on Irving's literary work.

The book contains eight beautiful illustrations.

**THE BANDITTI OF THE PLAINS, or  
The Cattlemen's Invasion of Wyoming  
in 1892, by A. S. Mercer.** Foreword by  
William H. Kittrell. Illustrated. 195  
pp. University of Oklahoma Press. \$2  
*Reviewed by Frank Dobie.*

Originally printed at Cheyenne, Wyo., in 1894, "The Banditti of the Plains" was so thoroughly suppressed that even the copyright copies disappeared from the Library of Congress. The latest (1954) offering of a first edition of the book is at \$250. This reprint contains William H. Kittrell's foreword, packed with history and brightened by wit.

In 1892 the big cattle operators of Johnson County, Wyo., considered most of the other citizens of their region as either "ranchers who rustled on the side" or "rustlers who ranched on the side." They made up a generous purse and enlisted in Texas, and elsewhere, men who would fight the rustlers and squatters for \$5 a day, plus a \$3,000 accident policy and a \$50 bonus to each hireling for every man killed on the other side.

The "hired murderers," as Mercer calls them, and their fighting hirers numbered between fifty and sixty. Their first mistake was in besieging a ranch house that sheltered a man named Nate Champion, who left a diary on his dead body. The "Powder River Invasion" was a fiasco. It cost the planners heavily, but none so heavily as the "cow-country Zola," A. S. Mercer, who put names into his history. The shop that printed it had to go out of business and the owner to jail on the charge of printing "obscene literature." Mercer himself was squelched from prominence to oblivion—except for the passport he wrote to remembrance. Literature on the "Johnson County War" has been growing all these years. Mr. Kittrell's introduction brings both it and the range troubles back of it into focus.

[Editor's Note: Geographically, this exciting episode occurred just south of the Montana cattle and sheep country lying between the Big Horn Mountains and famed Powder River; bordered on the north by the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservations. It had great impact on Montana. For many years after,

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY

cowboys and tight-lipped men with notches on their guns, in recluses in such places as the Castle Mountains, Missouri River breaks and the Little Rockies were regarded—both accurately and inaccurately—as “Johnson County Gunmen.” Because of the inflammable nature of this controversial book, reviewers even today cannot find a common meeting ground. We are indebted to THE BRAND BOOK of the Wyoming West-erners for Mr. David’s review and to the NEW YORK TIMES for Mr. Dobie’s presentation. Because these reviews are polarity opposites, our only suggestion is that you read this remarkable book and form your own opinion. The review by Robert B. David of Casper, Wyo., follows:]

*The Banditti of the Plains*, a re-issue of the book first published in 1894, was purposely slanted to the side of the cattle thieves, and their friends after the stockmen had refused Mercer’s offer to write the account from their standpoint. It records purported events leading up to and including the invasion of Johnson county by stockmen and their gun-fighters, the battle at the T A ranch, and subsequent events.

The “confession” of George Dunning has been added to an appendix. This statement was available to me when I wrote my book, *Malcolm Campbell, Sheriff*, but I felt that confessions obtained at gun-point had questionable value.

In reading *Banditti of the Plains*, the reader must decide whether the book be classified as history or propaganda. If it is history the author must have built his chapters as I did in my book of the stockman’s side. No incident should have been recorded until verified by living leaders, both invaders and rustlers. In this book, nineteen stockmen sued the author for libel immediately on publication. So I conclude it to be propaganda, and one must read with that premise in mind.

Some propaganda is well done, the criteria being its factual integrity and proper conclusions. The fact that the author agreed to suppress the book if the stockmen would withdraw their suits for libel should testify if this book had a basis of facts or not.

Of my own personal knowledge, I can only speak for those statements which Mercer made relating to my father, all of which I know to be erroneous.

I pray sincerely that our children may know the day when all authors will write

SUMMER, 1954

to portray truth, tempered with charity, for the weakness of our fathers, rustler and stockmen alike.

INDIAN WARS OF THE WEST, by Paul I. Wellman, Doubleday and Company, (Garden City Publishers) N. Y., 1954, 484 pp., \$5.

Reviewed by John T. Vance, III  
They were Americans all!

Roman Nose and Stillwell, Red Cloud and Sibley, Yellow Nose and McKinney, Black Kettle and Chivington, Crazy Horse and Crook, Sitting Bull and Custer — Martini, O’Brien, De Rubio, Dixon, Man-Afraid-of-His-Horses, Dull Knife, Santanta and Geronimo, they butchered each other recklessly.

A great people’s pride and shame is here recounted. The times were savage; the encounters were ruthless. And they were accompanied by a barbarity perhaps unequalled in history. Americans were grandly and tragically portraying man’s inhumanity to man.

Perhaps you won’t like all of these Americans. You may feel shame. But you cannot escape a surge of pride at the example of courage and elemental humanity your forbears set you.

Those forbears, red — yes, and black and white — put little faith in legal procedure. Points of order were largely for the record. The slightest slight was carried to carnage. The scene was the West; and the public was a participant AND a viewer. Those were times to learn from, not to revel in.

*The Indian Wars of the West* is a re-issue in one volume of two books by Mr. Wellman, *Death on the Prairie* and *Death in the Desert*. It should be read by all who interest themselves in Americans. Those who do will read more.

“Have enjoyed your magazine very much for the past year, especially the Spring issue article on my Uncle, Howell Harris.”

ED W. HARRIS  
Fort Benton, Mont.

## FORTHCOMING BOOKS

### To Be Reviewed in Later Issues

STRUTHERS BURT has said, "In all American history there is nothing finer than the loping march of the Cheyennes up from the Indian Territory and their subsequent incredible frozen flight. The march of Xenophon and his ten thousand was as nothing compared with it . . ." This is the setting for Mari Sandoz' monumental CHEYENNE AUTUMN, which, according to advance information, is one of the finest pieces ever written on injustice and exploitation of a plains Indian tribe. . . .

\* \* \*

Ralph C. Henry, who wrote HIGH BORDER COUNTRY and MAJESTIC MONTANA under the pen name of Eric Thane, has just produced TREASURE STATE, THE STORY OF MONTANA (For Junior Montanans), published by State Publishing Co., of Helena. If it hits the mark it will fill a long-felt need in the teaching of history to our youth.

\* \* \*

SIX-GUNS & SADDLE LEATHER is the intriguing title of a new "Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets on Western Outlaws and Gunmen" by Ramon F. Adams; a \$12.50 opus from the University of Oklahoma's fine press. It is purported to provide critical evaluations of 1,132 titles, ranging from rare and curious volumes of forgotten folklore to books that have become celebrated Western classics. Many collectors of Western Americana have not yet read Adams COME AN' GET IT, the Story of the Cowboy Cook. So it, too, awaits review.

\* \* \*

Other books worthy of mention, whether it be critical or complimentary, include:

Contemporary comment on the cow business, which is "damn fine for men and mules," but HELL ON HORSES

and WOMEN, from the pen of Alice Marriott, a trained ethnologist whose three previous books charmingly related to the Southwest and Pueblo country and people. This time she gets within a long days ride of God's Country—that is, to Wyoming.

\* \* \*

Still running like a lank longhorn after several months on the trail is J. Evetts Haley's XIT RANCH OF TEXAS (And the Early Days of Llano Estacado). This fabulous venture by the Capitol Freehold Land and Investment Company of Chicago, which provided funds to erect the capitol building in Austin and was gratuitously rewarded by the patent of a vast chunk of the Lone Star State, is possibly the most famous of all cattle ranches. Certainly XIT's rough history was significant to Montana, where vast herds with this brand began to trail in the 1880's.

\* \* \*

There's always more fiction—some good, but mostly bad—than there is of the more solid, enduring non-fictional and authoritative stuff. Several novels should emerge by Fall. But at the moment the only one we have seen is THE TALL MEN by Clay Fisher, which purports to reenact a 1,500 mile epic trail drive.

---

"Very pleased with the new layout. It is, without a doubt, the finest historical magazine that reaches here."

HUGH A. DEMPSEY  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Marcus Daly, whose colors have previously been the copper with green cap, under which Tammany and Montana scored their many famous victories, has decided to make a partial change, and in the future his jacket will have silver sleeves; for second colors, green bands will also be added.

Anaconda Weekly Review  
March 30, 1893

MONTANA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY



## FAMOUS GUIDE

In the Trapper Mining District between Butte and Dillon, the camp of Glendale hummed merrily in the late 1870's and 80's. Long since a ghost, it is interesting that the camp newspaper, *THE ATLANTIS*, detached itself from a preoccupation with new diggings, mills and furnaces, to record this bit on the declining years of that swashbuckling Mountain Man, Jim Bridger, who had defied the Rocky Mountain wilderness half a century earlier. Note the tragedy of old age conquering the irrepressible Bridger.

Most of us heard time and time again that Jim Bridger, the famous guide, trapper and pioneer of the great plains and mountains of the West, was dead. But we happened to meet the other day, Mr. Chas. T. Harrington, who resides on Big Blue creek, Missouri, directly opposite Bridger's farm house; and from him we obtained the following item, which will be of interest to thousands of readers: Bridger has a homestead of 320 acres with a two-story frame dwelling containing 21 rooms, situated four miles from New Santa Fe., Jackson county, Missouri. His daughter Jennie keeps house for him. She is married to Capt. Washman Washburne, a German. His daughter Mary leases out her share of land. She visits her father's room several times every night, to see that he is covered up and comfortable. The old man has a sort of chilliness at night and requires a great deal of bedding. His son, Wm. Bridger, also resides on his portion of the farm. Jim Bridger frequently visits the little town of Santa Fe, but always in care of a member of his family, who leads him around. He is almost totally blind and feels his way with a heavy staff with a club on the end. It is said that when provoked he wields this club like a gladiator. His house has a great many visitors, who come from far and near to hear the old man spin his wonderful yarns about the West and the events of the thrilling life that he led here. He can still out talk any seven men that he has ever come in contact with. He is as anxious to live West as ever, and declares he would not stay East a day if he could only have the use of his eyes. His first wife died many years

ago, and his second about 16 years since. The three children who are alive, are by his second wife. Bridger is the most remarkable man of all the American pioneers. What we know personally of him, from camping with him, if put into print, would fill a large volume. Kit Carson, Jack Robinson, Jim Beckwith and hundreds of others, about whom books have been made, were only his hired men. Old Lou Anderson who camped so long on the frontier was a partner of his. It was from old Lou that we first obtained a few points about the scenery of Yellowstone Hell, from a superstitious yarn that he spun us about ghosts and hobgoblin hosts that the ignorant trapper connected with the Wonderland of Montana, and this stimulated us to explore what is now known as the National Park, four years before anyone else ever did. The trappers, like the Indians, had a superstitious dread of the locality. Lou Anderson always called Jim Bridger, "Old Gabe;" everyone else called him "Major." Bridger could not write his name, but we gave him pencil and papers, and he would mark the creeks, and other natural landmarks, so exactly that we have guided pilgrims over strange ground by a map so made. They all the while wondering how it could be done by a person who had never previously traversed the region. Our only answer as to how he could manage it, was always the one that Bridger gave when cornered: "Natural good head man; natural good head!"—*The Atlantis*, Glendale, Montana, December 1, 1880.

"... congratulations on your new Montana Magazine of History ... what a fine impression it makes compared to the traditional state magazines of history. It has the *American Heritage* touch."

ROBERT G. DUNBAR  
Montana State College,  
Bozeman, Mont.



## DIRECTOR'S ROUNDUP

K. ROSS TOOLE

I often shudder when I contemplate the possibility of some of my former graduate school colleagues (who are now ensconced here and there in professional capacities) coming to visit me at the Historical Society. I hesitate even to entertain the *thought* of any of my former professors paying such a visit. You see, I have become a huckster and whatever elements may once have been scholarly in my being are now thoroughly tainted with commercialism. My former associates and friends would either cluck their disapproval or simply turn discretely and dispiritedly away.

I spend most of my time asking for money to complete our new museum. I ask, plead, devise, plot, dun, blast and pry. If the occasion demands it, and there seems to be a pretty good prospect in the offing, I can be righteously indignant, offhanded, sly, candid, blunt, devious, impassioned, eager and even profane. I have yet to bend my knee literally, but I've bent it a thousand times figuratively—and I'll do it again and again. Why? Well its perfectly simple.

Because the State of Montana isn't paying for this museum and we must therefore pay for it ourselves; because its a wonderful museum with a wonderful service to perform; because it is an enduring thing for Montana.

I get mad, even irate, at the tight fisted parsimony of a lot of people. But what really elevates my hackles is that the money we get doesn't come from where it ought to come. It doesn't come from those who have it, but from those who don't. Perhaps that is why those who have it, have it, and those who don't, don't. But those who have their roots deep in this community of Montana and who owe their good fortune (and prosperity to it are actually in debt.

Sure, people with money are constantly hit by solicitors. If the man who lives next door to me were a millionaire but didn't happen to give a damn about a good museum and art gallery, then he ought not give a cent to it.

I'm talking about the people with money who are proud of this museum and are articulate about it—the people who bring their friends here and keep patting us on the back and telling us what splendid work we are doing. We don't need accolades. We need money. We can't build a museum out of purple encomiums. It takes money.

I met a man the other day who said that my "Director's Roundup" exhibited an increasing and unbecoming arrogance and belligerence. He was dead wrong about the arrogance. I guess he was right about the belligerence. Perhaps a modicum of belligerence always marks the transition from the naive belief that a fine thing will receive support merely because it merits it—and the realization that getting monetary support for a project like this is a hard, often bitter, frequently humiliating job.

So far, for every dollar the state has appropriated toward *any* of our endeavors, we have matched that dollar with one of our own. The reason that one of the finest museums in the country is emerging here (and the reason that this Society as a whole is going full blast) is that we simply can't believe that full support won't be forthcoming. Montana *needs* this museum, the research library, the Russell Gallery, the Gallery of Western Art, the Gallery of Fine Art, and the *Montana Magazine of History*. And it is *good business*—good in terms of tourist dollars and educational content.

We have one nostril above the financial waters. Does anybody want to save us? Even ten dollars' worth of buoyancy might get us through the next squall.

